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Corrective feedback and learner uptake: focus-on-form instruction in primary school EFL classrooms in China

Corrective Feedback and Learner Uptake: Focus-on-Form Instruction in Primary School EFL Classrooms in China

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Abstract

Previous research has suggested that corrective feedback has considerable potential for providing learners with significant L2 learning opportunities. It thus plays a beneficial role in L2 learning. This study examined corrective feedback and learner uptake in focus-on-form instruction contexts in primary school EFL classrooms in China. This study examined the classroom interaction of two teachers and their learners (36 Grade 5 and 35 Grade 6) in 26 lessons to investigate the way in which these teachers spontaneously attended to form, and to determine the extent to which these Chinese young learners could and did subsequently demonstrate uptake in their production. Classroom observations transcripts, totalling 15.2 hours of classroom interaction were analysed to determine (i) the differences in the total number and distribution of learner errors, corrective feedback and learner uptake between the two classes, (ii) to what extent learner errors, corrective feedback are related to learner uptake. In addition, individual interviews (approximately 8 hours) with both teachers and learners were carried out. This qualitative perspective was used to assist interpreting lesson transcripts in relation to the two points above.

The results demonstrate a difference in the total number of learner errors, even though the distribution of error types was similar between the two classes. Among all error types, grammatical errors occurred with the highest frequency, phonological errors came next, with lexical errors occurring with the lowest frequency. The evidence also indicates that both teachers attended to a similar percentage of learner errors with corrective feedback in spite of the varied number of learner errors. This suggests that both teachers were often willing to attend to form in communicative lessons. The results also reveal that lexical and phonological errors were more likely to receive attention from teachers than grammatical errors. Furthermore, the study provides evidence that the teachers relied extensively on recasts when attending to learner errors in lessons, lending support to the finding of previous studies that recasts as a corrective feedback was preferred by language teachers. The study provides evidence that both teachers often created opportunities for learner uptake to take place; accordingly, learners often actively corrected their errors when they were allowed to do so.

The study also indicates that grammatical errors were more likely to receive recasts, resulting in the lowest rate of learner uptake. Repetition requests and elicitation were more likely to attend to phonological errors that led to the lowest rate of needs-repair. Explicit feedback and recasts were less effective at eliciting learner uptake than other corrective feedback. These results suggest that the teachers often take advantage of corrective feedback, creating opportunities for learners to correct errors, and learners are capable of correcting errors after a prompt. Such attention to form that provides learners with an opportunity to negotiate of form or meaning can potentially benefit L2 learning. This study concludes with implications for pedagogy, research and teacher professional development that are made based upon these findings.

Dedication

This piece of work is dedicated to my beloved family,
who deserve all my gratitude, respect and admiration!

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Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other academic award. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Figures

List of Appendices

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study is to examine corrective feedback and learner uptake in focus-on-form instruction contexts in primary school EFL classrooms. This introductory chapter provides background information and the rationale for the study, and sets out its overall objectives, scope, design, and approaches to the inquiry. The organisation of the dissertation is provided at the end of this chapter.

1.2 Background of the study

According to Ellis (2001), the term of focus-on-form is used to refer to any planned or incidental instructional activity to draw learner's attention to linguistic forms in a meaning-focused lesson (see also section 2.2.1 for the definition). Pedagogically, corrective feedback is an important component of focus-on-form instruction, referring to a teacher's response to learner errors (see also section 2.2.1 for the definition). The surge of research in the area of focus-on-form instruction over the past two decades can be attributed to several factors. One has been theoretical realization that the importance of corrective feedback claimed by White (1987), who suggests that what is necessary for second language (L2, henceforth) learning is not comprehensible input, but incomprehensible input. She argues that incomprehensible input (i.e., corrective feedback) that pushes learners to modify their output is the impetus for learners to recognize the insufficiency of their inter-language. Additionally, some researchers suggest that comprehensible input alone is not sufficient for successful L2 learning (Allen *et al.* 1990), and comprehensible output is also required (Swain 1985).

Different L2 learning hypotheses have put 'corrective feedback' at the center stage as a facilitator of L2 learning. For example, the interaction hypothesis (Long 1996) posits that interaction which pushes learners to modify their output in response to corrective feedback may facilitate L2 learning, as this type of interaction brings

together corrective feedback, learner capacities, and learner output. Learner output is often termed learner uptake in focus-on-form studies (see section 2.2.3 for the definition of uptake). The interaction hypothesis has served as a major theoretical framework for empirical studies on focus-on-form over the last 20 years or so. Noticing hypothesis (Schmidt 1990; 1995) suggests that corrective feedback helps learners to notice the gap between inter-language and target forms. Corrective feedback that provides learners with an opportunity to correct the errors can not only help learners to notice errors in the production, but also potentially push learners to produce comprehensible output (Schmidt 1990; Swain 1985; 1995). As a result, corrective feedback has been considered as a way of drawing learners' attention to notice the discrepancy between their inter-language and the target forms (Schmidt 1990); uptake has been considered as evidence that learners notice the form (Lightbown 2000). According to Swain's (1985) output hypothesis, learner's uptake and teacher's consistent corrective feedback is necessary for L2 learning.

In addition to these theoretical perspectives, the realization of focus-on-form research has also been accompanied by empirical prominence. Focus-on-form has recently gained attention in studies across various L2 education contexts (e.g., Carroll and Swain 1993; Lyster and Ranta 1997; Ellis *et al.* 2001a). Questions have been raised regarding the role that focus-on-form instruction plays in L2 learning. A number of researchers have looked specifically into its nature and role in L2 teaching and learning (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997; Doughty and Varela 1998; Oliver 2000). Some studies have examined the differential effects of explicit and implicit focus-on-form instruction on learning (e.g., Carroll and Swain 1993; Ellis *et al.* 2006), with some general finding that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit instruction (see, also, Norris and Ortega 2000; Norris and Ortega 2001). Some researchers have provided important insights into the role of focus-on-form in L2 learning (e.g., Long *et al.* 1998; Mackey and Philp 1998; McDonough 2005). The majority of the studies have demonstrated that

focus-on-form instruction that provides learners with an opportunity to modify their output plays a positive part in L2 learning.

1.3 Rationale for the study

The study was motivated by the assumption that focus-on-form instruction plays a facilitative part in L2 learning (Schmidt 1990; Long 1996). I have found that many focus-on-form studies demonstrate focus-on-form instruction that provides corrective feedback with opportunities for learners to modify their output plays a facilitative role in L2 learning. However, relatively few studies that examine the role of focus-on-form have been done in instructional settings, with the majority being undertaken in experimental settings. Haneda (2005:314) remarks that whole-class interaction is "a major site for second language learning and teaching in the everyday reality of classrooms". Thus, I am undertaking a classroom-based observational study in which corrective feedback and learner uptake are examined.

Also there has been sufficient knowledge to use the effects of age of learner (child vs. adult), interactional context (dyadic or teacher-fronted setting), or interlocutor types (native speaker or non-native speaker) on the provision and the use of corrective feedback (e.g., Oliver 2000; Mackey *et al.* 2003). However, there remains a dearth of studies that compare the provision and the use of corrective feedback in EFL classrooms of young learners taught by different teachers. I was, therefore, motivated to conduct a study to examine the similarities and differences in the practice of focus-on-form between two EFL classrooms in a primary school.

While this study aims to make contribution to larger research agenda examining focus-on-form instruction in Chinese EFL classrooms, it is also my personal hope that this study may provide a framework for teacher professional development. In China, English has been introduced as a compulsory school subject to Grade 3 primary school learners since 2001, lowering the age of compulsory instruction of English from Grade 5 to Grade 3. China has encountered a considerable number of

problems since the implementation of this new education policy, such as lack of competent teachers, quality teaching materials, a sound syllabus design, as well as a proper transition from primary school English instruction to secondary school level. Thus, there is much room for empirical studies to be undertaken in China to solve these problems. It is of my personal interest to gain some special insights into focus-on-form instruction and make contributions to China EFL instructional practices at the primary school level.

1.4 Research objectives and research design

To understand the practice of focus-on-form in L2 learning, I look into the provision and the use of corrective feedback in primary school EFL classrooms in China. One main objective of this study is to understand corrective feedback that EFL teachers use to attend to learner errors in EFL classes as well as learner's responses to it. Furthermore, this research aims to find any relationship between learner errors, corrective feedback and learner uptake in this particular setting. Specifically, I undertook an observational study of two classrooms to compare the similarities and differences of the provision and the use of corrective feedback in their lessons. Four major aspects were taken into consideration: i) learners' errors; ii) teachers' corrective feedback; iii) opportunities for learner uptake; iv) learners' uptake. In addition to the comparison, I also examine to what extent learner errors, corrective feedback are related to learner uptake in the child EFL context.

As Table1.1 indicates, this study comprises two case studies in which two English teachers and their students in a China primary school were observed and then interviewed about the practice of focus-on-form in EFL classes. This occurred over 10-week period for each of the two classes and involved approximately 15.2 hours of classroom observation and approximately eight hours of individual face-to-face interviews with both teachers and 16 pupils. For both data sets (i.e. the two classes) audio-recordings were made during normal class times and under normal class conditions. Each class was audio-taped and transcribed for analysis. Table 1.1 gives

an overview of the study's overall design.

Table 1.1 Overview of research design

RESEARCH DESIGN	
Research Questions:	RQ1: To what extent are the types of learner errors different between the two classes? RQ2: To what extent is the provision of corrective feedback to learner errors different between the two classes? 1) To what extent is the total number of corrective feedback different? 2) To what extent is teachers' tendency different (i.e. what kinds of errors they tend to ignore, what sort they appear to correct)? 3) To what extent is teachers' preference for corrective feedback types different? 4) To what extent are the opportunities for using feedback different? RQ3: To what extent is learner uptake different between the two classes? RQ4: To what extent are learner errors, corrective feedback related to learner uptake?
Strategy:	Case study in two classes
Participants:	Two EFL teachers and their learners (n=71) at a primary school in China
Data collection methods:	1) Non-participant Observation: sustained observations over 10 weeks (approximately 20 hours lessons recording, 15.2 hours of which was used for analysis; see Chapter 3 for more details) 2) Face-to-face individual interviews with both teachers and 16 pupils (approximately 8 hours)
Timeline:	Data collection: March. 2007- May. 2007 (10 weeks) Data analysis: April. 2007- Dec. 2007

1.5 Organisation of the dissertation

This dissertation, comprising seven chapters, presents a record of the study's design, implementation, findings and implications. I summarise each chapter of the dissertation below:

Chapter 1 sets out the aim of the study and gives background and an overview of the study.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of studies on corrective feedback and learner

uptake in the existing literature; it provides key definitions of terms (i.e., focus-on-form, corrective feedback, learner uptake) used in the study, highlighting the role that corrective feedback and learner uptake plays in L2 learning. It concludes with some identified core issues that need to be investigated.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methodological approaches of this study. It starts with the underpinnings of the entire study's methodology, and describes the research design in detail as well as the processes of data collection and analysis; it also deals with ethical issues arising; it concludes with the quality of the research.

Chapter 4 & 5 present the findings of this study and address the interpretations of the results. Chapter 6 presents a summary of the results and elaborates on the results in the light of the contribution to the existing literature.

Chapter 7 considers pedagogical implications for EFL teaching and learning and teacher professional development in China; it discusses the limitations of this study; it also makes recommendation for future research.

1.6 Summary

This introductory chapter has discussed why I have chosen this topic and explained my motivation of carrying out this research. It has also described the overall objectives of this study and given an overview of this study and overall data collection strategy. Finally, it has presented how this dissertation is structured.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I start with the definitions of terms used in this study, and then argue the importance of studies on focus-on-form, corrective feedback and learner uptake. I then review empirical studies that have specifically examined corrective feedback and learner uptake to document the different angles from which these topics have been examined and similar or different results that have been elicited from different studies. A gap in knowledge which is worthy of research is identified at the end of this chapter.

2.2 Defining the terms

2.2.1 Defining 'focus-on-form'

Long (Long 1991; Long *et al.* 1998) has proposed that instructional options can be of three types, depending on whether the focus is on meaning, forms or an integration of both meaning and forms. Meaning-focused instruction encompasses communicative tasks and activities in which the primary goal is language use (Richards and Rodgers 2001). However, form-focused instruction involves "any pedagogical effort to draw learners' attention to language either implicitly or explicitly" (Spada 1997: 73). Form-focused instruction has been further divided into a focus-on-formS and a focus-on-form (Long 1991; 1996). Focus-on-formS is defined as instruction in which syllabi and lessons are based on linguistic items, and participants are primarily concerned with linguistic items (Long 1991).

Long (1991:45-46) defines focus-on-form as follows:

> Focus-on-form…overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication.

More recently, Long & Robinson (1998:23) claim that

> Focus-on-form often consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features- by the teacher and/or one or more students- triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production.

As indicated by Long, the prerequisite of focus-on-form is engagement in primarily meaning-focused activities. Long's definition also underlies a number of

assumptions of focus-on-form, including it being incidental, observational and broadly-focused (see, also, Ellis *et al.* 2001a). This definition of focus-on-form does not entirely match with that from some other researchers (e.g., Doughty and Williams 1998b). According to Doughty and Williams (1998b), focus-on-form includes both incidental and planned lessons addressing linguistic features in the context of meaning-focused instruction. In this sense, apart from arising incidentally, focus-on-form can also be planned, and it is more intensive rather than extensive. Ellis (2001) conceptualizes form-focused instruction in terms of three types listed in the below table.

Table 2.1 Types of form-focused instruction (FFI)

TYPES OF FFI	PRIMARY FOCUS	DISTRIBUTION
Focus-on-formS	Form	Intensive
Planned focus-on-form	Meaning	Intensive
Incidental focus-on-form	Meaning	Extensive

As shown in Table 2.1, focus-on-formS is characterized by a primary focus on form and intensive treatment of pre-selected forms. Planned focus-on-form differs from focus-on-formS regarding where the primary focus of attention lies on meaning rather than form, but like focus-on-formS involves intensive attention to pre-selected forms. In cidental focus-on-form also involves primary attention to meaning but differs from both focus-on-formS and planned focus-on-form in spreading attention to a wide range of forms that have not been pre-selected.

Long and Robinson (1998) further distinguish two types of incidental focus-on-form: preemptive focus-on-form and reactive focus-on-form. The former involves a teacher or a learner takes time out from a communicative activity to initiate explicit attention to a form that is perceived problematic even though no actual errors in the use of the form or difficulty with message comprehension have arisen. Reactive focus-on-form refers when a learner has produced a real or perceived error and the teacher or another learner responds to this error (see also

Ellis *et al.* 2001a). Reactive focus-on-form involves drawing learner's attention to a learner error by providing error correction within meaning-focused activities. Reactive focus-on-form that involves the treatment of learner errors (Ellis *et al.* 2002), consists of teacher's and learner's responses to a committed error in meaning-focused lessons (Ellis 2001).

2.2.2 Defining 'corrective feedback'

Teachers' responses to an error are also known as corrective feedback. Corrective feedback refers to a teacher's utterance that identifies a learner error and provides feedback in response to the error (Schachter 1991). Ellis *et al.* (2006) offer a more comprehensible definition of corrective feedback:

> Corrective feedback takes the form of teacher's responses to learner utterances that contain an error. The responses can consist of (a) an indication that an error has been committed, (b) provision of the correct target language form, or (c) metalinguistic information about the nature of the error, or any combination of these (Ellis *et al.* 2006:340).

To explore focus-on-form instruction in content-based context, Lyster and Ranta (1997) have identified different types of corrective feedback that French immersion classroom teachers provided when an error arose in their lessons. The category includes explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and repetition (see Section 3.5.3 for the definitions). Corrective feedback differs in terms of whether it is explicit or implicit in nature. Explicit feedback involves an overt indicator of a committed error; whereas in implicit feedback types, there is no overt indicator of a committed error. Implicit feedback often takes the form of recasts. According to Long (2007:2),

> recasts refers to a reformulation of all or part of a learner's immediately preceding utterance in which one or more non-target like (lexical, grammatical etc.) items are replaced by the corresponding target language form(s), and where, throughout the exchange, the focus of the interlocutors is on meaning not language as an object.

Explicit feedback can take two forms: explicit feedback and metalinguistic feedback. Explicit feedback refers to a teacher's response clearly indicating that what a learner said is incorrect (e.g., "No, not doed—did.") and thus affords both positive and negative evidence (Ellis *et al.* 2006). Lyster and Ranta (1997:47)

define metalinguistic feedback as "comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the learner's utterance" (e.g., "You need present tense."), which affords only, negative evidence.

2.2.3 Defining 'uptake'

Another key construct in the research is 'uptake' which has been examined in a substantial number of studies (e.g., Carroll and Swain 1993; Lyster and Ranta 1997; Lyster 1998a). Uptake has been used with two different meanings. Slimani (1992:197) has defined uptake as "what learners claim to have learned from a particular lesson" (see also Allwright 1984). Lyster, however, uses uptake to refer to learners' response to teacher's corrective feedback on the error they made.

Lyster and Ranta define uptake as

> A student's utterance that immediately follows the teacher's feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher's intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student's initial utterance (Lyster and Ranta 1997:49).

In this study, learner uptake is used to describe learners' immediate responses to teachers' corrective feedback on learner errors in lessons. Uptake is considered successful when it demonstrates that a learner has understood the linguistic form or has corrected the error. On the other hand, uptake is considered unsuccessful when a learner fails to demonstrate the command of the feature (Lyster and Ranta 1997). Successful uptake is also known as repair, referring to "the correct reformulation of an error as uttered in a single turn and not to the sequence of turns resulting in the correct reformulation; nor does it refer to self-initiated repair" (Lyster and Ranta 1997:49); unsuccessful uptake is also known as needs-repair (Lyster and Ranta 1997; Ellis *et al.* 2001a), referring to uptake that results in an utterance that is still in need of repair (see also section 3.5.3 for further details).

2.3 Importance of studies on corrective feedback and uptake

Focus-on-form that is an integration of meaning-focused and form-focused instruction in L2 classroom (Ellis 2001) has received considerable attention from

researchers (e.g., Long *et al.* 1998; Doughty 2001; Ellis *et al.* 2001a; Ellis *et al.* 2001b). The interests in focus-on-form research can be partly attributed to the implication that it can lead to increased accuracy in production (Loewen 2003). Long (1996: 451-2) proposes that interaction facilitates L2 learning because the role of interaction connects "input, internal learner abilities, particular selective attention and output in productive ways". According to Long's (1996) interaction hypothesis, learners can benefit from engagement in interaction because such an opportunity allows learners to turn their attention to linguistic forms. If negotiated interaction is as important as that has been claimed, then teachers may need to incorporate focus-on-form into meaning-focused instruction, such as providing corrective feedback to attend to learner errors. Corrective feedback, one important component of focus-on-form instructions, gives attention to form thus providing learners with an opportunity to negotiate for meaning or form through classroom interaction. Many L2 researchers have claimed that focus-on-form that draws learner's attention to the connection between meaning and form is optimal for learning (Doughty 2001), attention to form will work most effectively for acquisition when it takes place in the context of meaning-focused instruction (Long 1996).

Correspondingly, the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt 1990; 1995) suggests that in order to acquire new linguistic features, learners must consciously notice these forms in the input. According to Schmidt's noticing hypothesis, learner's 'noticing the gap' between inter-language and target forms has been hypothesized to assist inter-language development. The noticing hypothesis is most often cited to explain the benefits that corrective feedback can potentially bring about in L2 research. If this hypothesis proves to be true, teachers may require taking time out from communicative activities, drawing learners' attention to form to ensure them aware of their errors when carrying out communicative tasks. Corrective feedback provided by teachers can serve to draw learners' attention to the gap between inter-language and target forms by highlighting linguistic forms that are still

problematic to them.

Learners are able to grasp linguistic features without formal instruction; however, they typically do not achieve native-like linguistic competence through entire meaning-focused instructions (Ellis *et al.* 2002). This has inspired researchers such as Swain (1995) who claims that learners need to attend to form rather than simply engage in communicative language use. Attention to form helps learners to notice the gap (Schmidt and Frota 1986) between the input and their own inter-language and gives them opportunities for "pushed output" (i.e., to increase linguistic accuracy by correcting errors they made). Swain (1985) argues comprehensible output that forces learners to move from the semantic level of processing to the syntactic level in order to produce the target language facilitates L2 learning. This hypothesis also implies the importance of corrective feedback in the communicative teaching context.

In addition to these theoretical reasons for claiming that teachers need to attend to form in communicative lessons, a number of empirical studies suggested that corrective feedback can be useful for L2 learning (e.g., Carroll and Swain 1993; Doughty and Varela 1998; Long *et al.* 1998; Mackey and Philp 1998; Loewen 2005; Ellis *et al.* 2006). Focus-on-form instruction has appeal because it occurs within the context of meaning-focused activities when learners are faced with a linguistic problem and it is used to ensure that learners accurately use what they have been taught (Long *et al.* 1998; Doughty and Williams 1998b).

Many researchers have claimed that learner uptake may facilitate learner's inter-language development. Swain (1985) states that learner's production of modified output is necessary for L2 mastery and may result from ample opportunities for learner output on the one hand and from the provision of useful and consistent feedback from teachers and peers on the other. Swain (1995:128-129) hypothesizes that comprehensible output serves a

"notice/triggering" function or a "consciousness-raising" role, and she reiterates that learner production of output and the linguistic problems that arise may lead learners "to notice what they do not know, or know only partially". Swain (1995:131) proposes that "modified, or reprocessed output can be considered to represent the leading edge of a learner's inter-language". This hypothesis indicates that learner uptake is facilitating L2 learning because it pushes learners to modify their output. In addition, Sadler (1989) argues that feedback, however detailed, will not lead to improvement until pupils understand both the feedback itself and how to use it in the context of their own work. Rea-Dickins (2002:92) argues that "not all feedback is formative; it is uptake of the feedback that contributes to whether feedback is effective in promoting processes of teaching and learning".

Besides, a number of empirical studies have examined learner uptake in a variety of contexts, with the suggestion that learner uptake may facilitate L2 learning. Sheen (2004) claims that learner uptake and repair might suggest that learners have at least noticed the feedback. Loewen (2005) argues that successful uptake is one of the major predictors of learners' subsequent accurate test scores. More recently, Nassaji (2007) argues that learner repair may contribute to L2 learning. A growing attention on corrective feedback and learner uptake from a number of researchers may be subject to their significant roles in L2 learning. Next, I will review studies that have examined corrective feedback and learner uptake as defined above.

2.4 A review of literature on corrective feedback and uptake

I shall briefly describe how I accessed initial body of literature before moving to reviewing the relevant literature. To search relevant studies, key-word searches were conducted with databases, such as ERIC, Australian Education Index, and British Education Index. Searches utilized the following word and word combination: 1) focus-on-form instruction, focus-on-formS, focus-on-meaning; 2) uptake; 3) corrective (negative) feedback and second (foreign) language learning (instruction); 4) error treatment and language learning (instruction). Meanwhile,

several other search techniques were employed. Back issues of 15 academic journals were browsed for relevant study reports. Besides, ScholarGoogle, PsycINFO, MLA Bibliography and ISI web of knowledge were also used to search relevant references. References sections from each retrieved study were cross-checked for additional study reports. After identifying a net of potentially relevant literature, all studies were retrieved through ERIC reproduction, library service as well as personal purchase from publishers. These searches of the literature have identified a number of empirical studies in which corrective feedback and/or learner uptake are/is relatively significant topic(s).

2.4.1 Corrective feedback

Many empirical studies that have examined the effects of focus-on-form instruction on language learning suggest that focus-on-form instruction can play a facilitative role in language learning (e.g., White 1989; Carroll *et al.* 1992; Carroll and Swain 1993; Doughty and Varela 1998). From the pedagogical perspective, corrective feedback has been the focus of a considerable number of studies into classroom teaching and learning from the 1970s (see Chaudron (1988), for an overview). The earliest studies in the 1970s presented purely descriptive findings of teachers' error treatment in a variety of classroom settings. One common finding among these earlier studies was that teachers' corrective feedback occurred frequently, irrespective of pedagogical focus and classroom setting (Fanselow 1977; Hendrickson 1978), and that corrective feedback was desired by most L2 learners (Cathcart and Olsen 1976; Chenoweth *et al.* 1983; Chaudron 1988). These studies, however, also revealed that teachers' provision of corrective feedback was often arbitrary, idiosyncratic, ambiguous and unsystematic, which in turn invited the question as to whether corrective feedback in the classroom was of any value (Long 1977, cited in Han 2001).

In this section, I review more recent research investigating the relative effects of different types of corrective feedback on L2 learning under two main subheadings:

observational (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997; Ellis *et al.* 2001a) and experimental settings (e.g., Carroll and Swain 1993; Leeman 2003; McDonough 2005). Table 2.2 (page 31-36) has been tabulated to summarise participants, research foci, method(s) as well as relative key findings of all empirical studies that are reviewed in this chapter.

1) Observational studies

A number of observational studies have investigated corrective feedback in a range of classroom contexts, including French immersion (Lyster and Ranta 1997), Canada ESL classroom (Panova and Lyster 2002) and Korea EFL (Sheen 2004), with the finding that corrective feedback occurs in meaning-focused lessons with varied occurrences.

For example, a series of studies have been undertaken in French immersion classes in Canada (Lyster and Ranta 1997; Lyster 1998a; 1998b). Lyster and Ranta (1997) distinguished six types of corrective feedback (i.e., explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and repetition) that teachers provided when attending to form in meaning-focused contexts. The findings suggested that French immersion teachers attended to 62% of learner errors that arose in communicative activities. When attending to problematic forms (i.e. learner errors), French immersion teachers relied extensively on recasts, accounting for 55% of total corrective feedback. The remaining feedback, however, as they reported, occurred with roughly equal frequency.

Lyster (1998a) further investigated recasts to determine whether or not different types of recasts could draw learners' attention to notice the errors. The recasts were classified into four types according to their pragmatic functions. The analysis of the data demonstrated the distribution of four types of identified recasts in the database: isolated declarative recasts (67%); isolated interrogative recasts (12%); incorporated declarative recasts (17%); and incorporated interrogative recasts (4%).

Lyster identified that teachers employed a considerable number of non-corrective repetitions (i.e., repeating learner's correct utterances) which performed identical functions as in classroom interaction as isolated declarative recasts that occurred with the highest frequency. Lyster, therefore, speculates this type of recasts may not have been salient to learners by arguing that learners may have experienced difficulty in acknowledging what was corrective feedback. It was also found that when teachers wished to draw learners' attention to forms, they appeared to use such feedback types as elicitation or metalinguistic feedback. Lyster argues that recasts as a form of corrective feedback is ambiguous in nature. Netten (1991:304), similarly, proposes that recasts are not a sufficient way of indicating to pupils, particularly low achievers, that modification of their utterance is of some significance in order to communicate in the target language.

Oliver (1995) provided evidence that corrective feedback in the form of recasts and negotiation was employed in child L2 interaction. It was found that negotiations occurred in response to multiple errors, whereas recasts occurred in response to singular error. Negotiations occurred to clarify meaning; recasts, however were used to correct form. Some other studies have investigated variables that may affect the provision of corrective feedback. For example, Oliver (2000) examined whether the age of learners (adult vs. child) and the context of interaction (pair-work vs. teacher-fronted lessons) affected the provision of corrective feedback. Oliver identified more corrective feedback provided in teacher-fronted lessons than NS-NNS dyads irrespective of age group. Oliver found that teachers responded with corrective feedback to approximately 50% of the students' errors, with the adult learners receiving more than child learners. In addition, the finding also indicated that adults received a larger proportion of corrective feedback in dyads contexts. Teachers of adult learners negotiated more with their students than the teachers of children, on the contrary, teachers of children were more likely to use recasts than teachers of adult learners. Interestingly, as opposed to teacher-fronted setting, child interlocutors in dyads were more likely to use

negotiation than the interlocutors of adults, who preferred to use recasts in response to forms. These findings suggest that the age of learner and the context of interaction may affect the provision of corrective feedback.

More recently, Ellis *et al.* (2001a) examined focus-on-form episodes (FFEs) in ESL (English as a second language) adult classrooms in a private language school in New Zealand, and identified three different types of FFEs (i.e., responding, preemptive and student-initiated FFEs). Similar to the results from previous studies (Lyster and Ranta 1997), they found the dominant feedback in responding FFEs was recasts. They attribute the high occurrence of recasts to the fact that recast are less likely to impede the communicative flow of a meaning-focused lesson than other forms of corrective feedback such as clarification or elicitation. They claim that focus-on-form can occur without disturbing the communicative flow of classroom.

Panova and Lyster (2002) examined the use of corrective feedback in an adult ESL classroom in Canada. In addition to the categories of corrective feedback identified in Lyster and Ranta's (1997) study, they added one extra which was defined as translation. They used translation to refer to a teacher's feedback following a learner's unsolicited use of the L1 in meaning-focused lessons. By analyzing 10-hour of classroom interaction, they also found that recasts were most frequently used in the classrooms, which accounted for 55% of all feedback; translation occurred with the second highest, accounting for 22% of all feedback; whereas the remaining types of corrective feedback only occupied 23% in total. The findings suggest that teachers strongly prefer to use corrective feedback in the form of recasts and translation.

Mackey *et al.* (2003) also conducted a comparison study, in which the age (adult versus child) and interlocutor type (NSs- native speakers or NNSs- non native speakers) were considered as two main variables to examine the differences in the

amount and the type of the corrective feedback. 48 dyads, which were evenly divided among adults and children (aged 8 to 12) and NNS-NS and NNS-NNS dyads, were engaged in task-based interactions. Their results showed that NS interlocutors in both age groups provided more corrective feedback than NNSs. However, in adult dyads, the feedback from NNSs was more likely to offer opportunities for modified output than NSs. Their study suggests that although there are no significant age differences in terms of the amount of the feedback, interlocutor type and learner age may affect the nature of feedback.

Loewen's (2003) study demonstrated variation in the frequency and characteristics of incidental focus-on-form within a single setting. He found that the variation can lie in teacher's beliefs about focus-on-form and tasks in which the learners were engaged in meaning-focused lessons. The study lends support to the claim that form-focused instruction can be incorporated into meaning-focused instruction (see also Ellis *et al.* 2001a).

Through a comparison among four communicative settings (i.e., French Immersion, Canada ESL, New Zealand ESL, and Korea EFL), Sheen (2004) found that the practice of focus-on-form may vary according to instruction contexts. The results indicated, irrespective of contexts, recasts were found to occur with the highest frequency; despite this, the distribution varied across different contexts. Korea EFL and New Zealand ESL teacher were found more likely to use recasts (accounting for 83% and 68% respectively) than Canada French Immersion and ESL classrooms, in which 55% was reported when attending to forms.

In summary, the research literature has provided evidence that many language teachers from a variety of contexts employed corrective feedback to attend to learner errors with different frequency. Although these observational studies did not demonstrate directly the effectiveness of corrective feedback on L2 learning, they provided evidence that through corrective feedback language teachers created

opportunities for learners to be engaged in classroom interaction to negotiate for meaning or form. Such opportunities allow learners to turn their attention to linguistic forms, thus facilitating and benefiting their L2 learning process. Furthermore, these studies indicate that recasts as a corrective feedback strategy is preferred by language teachers in a variety of contexts. However, learners may have difficulty in considering recasts as a corrective feedback, because recasts may not draw learners' attention to problematic linguistic forms due to its implicitness in nature (Lyster 1998a). This challenges teachers' common practice of using extensively recasts. Other studies however also argue that recasts are widely used probably because they are unlikely to interrupt the flow of the classroom interaction (e.g., Ellis *et al.* 2001a). These somewhat conflicting findings suggest that we need to give a careful consideration to the choice of corrective feedback, bearing in mind the potential effectiveness of corrective feedback chosen.

2) Experimental studies

In addition to observational studies, a considerable number of studies that have been under investigation in experimental settings to examine the effect of corrective feedback in focus-on-form instruction on L2 learning (e.g., Carroll and Swain 1993; Long *et al.* 1998; Mackey *et al.* 2000; McDonough 2005).

For example, Loewen (2005) observed meaning-focused classroom interaction and carried out a subsequent test of learners' ability to recall the targeted linguistic items to examine the relationship between corrective feedback and L2 learning. The empirical evidence suggests that corrective feedback may be beneficial to learners, especially successful uptake, is one of the major predictors of learners' subsequent accurate test scores. The study also suggests that learners may benefit from producing the correct forms.

Some experimental studies have compared the differential effects of explicit (e.g. metalinguistic feedback) and implicit feedback (e.g. recasts) on L2 learning. A

study by Carroll and Swain (1993), who designed a tightly controlled study in which they investigated the impact of corrective feedback on the ability of adult learners of ESL to acquire the dative alternation rules in English. Carroll and Swain reported that all feedback groups outperformed the control group on both immediate and delayed recall sessions. Their findings revealed that although both explicit and implicit feedback were beneficial for L2 learning, the former was more effective for the acquisition of the English dative alternation.

Lyster (2004) conducted a study with Grade 5 French immersion students in a primary school to investigate the differential impact of corrective feedback on L2 learning. As defined by Lyster's (2004), prompts consisted of clarification request, repetition, metalinguistic feedback, and elicitation. Using a pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test design, Lyster's (2004) found that all treatment groups who received corrective feedback significantly outperformed the comparison group that received no corrective feedback. The finding also revealed the focus-on-form instruction was more effective when it was combined with prompts than recasts.

McDonough (2005) has undertaken an experimental study in the context of adult EFL to examine the impact of corrective feedback on EFL learners' question development. McDonough found that corrective feedback in the form of clarification requests creating opportunities for learners to modify their output was a significant predictor of question development in the adult EFL context. The finding suggests that modified output in response to clarification requests is predictive of ESL question development for Thai EFL learners.

Ellis *et al.* (2006) examined the effects of implicit feedback in the form of recasts and explicit feedback in the form of metalinguistic feedback on the acquisition of English past tense-ed. The evidence indicated that the explicit feedback group outperformed both the recast and control groups on the oral elicited imitation test (designed to measure implicit knowledge) and on the grammatical items of the

un-timed grammaticality judgment test (designed to measure explicit knowledge). They attribute this finding to the explicit nature of the metalinguistic feedback, which does not detract unduly from the communicative flow of the lessons. Their findings indicate that corrective feedback may result in gain in implicit and explicit knowledge; however, the usefulness of corrective feedback depends on the explicitness of feedback and the extent to which it is able to draw the learner's attention to form.

Ellis (2007) further investigated the effects of explicit and implicit feedback on L2 learning to determine the differential effect of corrective feedback on two English grammar structures (past tense and comparative). The results indicated that recasts did not have a positive effect on acquisition of past tense- ed and comparative; on the contrary, explicit feedback was helpful for the two targeted grammar structures. However, explicit feedback was found to have a greater effect on comparative than that on past tense. These findings indicate that effectiveness of corrective feedback on L2 learning more or less depends on the salience of corrective feedback.

In summary, these experimental studies have provided evidence that corrective feedback can be useful for L2 learners; however, the effects more or less depend on its explicitness. Empirical studies have indicated that explicit feedback is more beneficial for L2 learning than implicit feedback even though the latter can also be helpful for L2 learning (e.g., Carroll and Swain 1993). However, some studies argue that the effects of feedback can vary due to different grammatical structures being targeted (Ellis 2007). Therefore, the extent to which learners are able to benefit from corrective feedback, to some degree is determined by a number of variables, such as the nature of the feedback (implicit or explicit feedback) and the structure being targeted. Next I will review several experimental studies that have specifically examined the effects of recasts on L2 learning.

Long *et al.* (1998) examined the effects of recasts and positive models on the

production of L2 Spanish adverb placement (i.e., SVAO order) and object topicalization and Japanese locative particles and adjective ordering. Using a pretest-posttest control group design, these researchers identified mixed findings. They found that the Spanish learners receiving recasts in response to their errors outperformed the group receiving models in the production of L2 Spanish adverb placement. However, no significant improvements between recasts and models were identified in the production of Spanish object topicalization nor Japanese locative particles or adjective ordering. This suggests that recasts may have differential effects on different language structures being targeted.

Also based on a pretest-posttest control group design, Mackey and Philp's (1998) examined the effectiveness of recasts on the acquisition of question forms development in English. The analysis of their pre-test and post-test results showed that recasts can have a positive impact on learner's inter-language development of question forms. In addition, the findings demonstrated that intensive recasts can make a difference in the production of questions for more advanced learners. They claim that recasts may not enable learners to acquire the target form until they are ready for it. This suggests that effects of corrective feedback more or less depend on the developmental stage of learners. Nevertheless, Mackey and Philp claim that recasts may also be beneficial even if learners fail to provide an immediate repair in response to it. They argue that learners can gain acquisition even though they fail to uptake recasts of their errors in the interaction; the immediate uptake of the learner in response to recasts may not be a predictor of acquisition.

Doughty and Varela (1998) undertook a study in which focus-on-form was optionalized as corrective recasts and implemented in two content-based science ESL classrooms in the United States. Using a pretest, posttest and delayed posttest design, the researchers found that the group who received corrective recasts outperformed in both accuracy and use of the targeted form (i.e., past tense) the control group who did not receive corrective recasts. Their study lends support to

the possibility that teachers in a meaning-focused instructional context provide recasts to draw learners' attention to errors. These findings suggest that recasts have positive effects on acquisition of past tense.

Braidi (2002) has explored the role of recasts in communicative interaction and L2 learning. The study examined the existence and short-term use of recasts between English NS and Japanese NNS dyads. The findings indicated that recasts were found to occur in all types of negotiation, with the overall rate of 15.45%. The frequency of recasts, however, was somewhat determined by the particular type of negotiation and the level of grammaticality (error-either a single error or multiple errors involving). It was found that recasts were more often employed in response to multiple-error utterance in one-signal and extended negotiations; more recasts were provided in response to multiple-error utterances than in response to single-error utterances. Braid's study implies that the type of negotiation and degree of errors play a role in the occurrence of recast.

Leeman (2003) examined the role of recasts in the acquisition of noun-adjective agreement in Spanish. The findings demonstrated that the recasts group and enhanced salience group (who received stressed or emphasized positive evidence) performed significantly better than the unenhanced input group (who did not receive any feedback on noun-adjective agreement) on the posttests. Leeman claims that recasts play a facilitative role in L2 learning because they provide positive evidence, not because they constitute negative evidence. Along with the assumption that learner participation in interaction can play a facilitative role in L2 learning, Leeman suggests that recast can lead to greater L2 learning, as it highlights specific forms in input. The findings, consistent with previous studies on recasts (e.g., Mackey and Philp 1998), indicate that recasts can play a facilitative role in L2 learning.

Although recasts are not as effective as explicit feedback, they have also been

proved useful for L2 learners. Some studies claim that the effects of recasts more or less depend on the targeted structures (Long *et al.* 1998), and type of negotiation and degree of errors (Braidi 2002). Some studies, however, claim that recasts are more beneficial to more advanced learners, suggesting that recasts can be beneficial at least for those learners who are 'ready' for the linguistic feature (Mackey and Philp's 1998).

The above studies have examined the effects of recasts on L2 learning; still other studies have examined recasts more from the perspective of learner's noticing of recasts. For example, Ohta (2000) undertook a study to investigate the private speech of adult foreign language learners of Japanese to response to recasts. The findings found that learners were more likely to react to a recast in private speech when it was directed to another learner to the class as a whole than when it was directed to their own error. Ohta argues that that recasts are more salient to auditors than the error initiator. Havranek's (2002) study of EFL classroom learners demonstrated peers outperformed corrected learners over post-test, thus confirmed the findings that recasts were more salient to peers than the initiator. Havranek argues that the role of auditors have advantages since they can concentrate on processing what they hear whereas corrected learners are under pressure because they are expected to react publicly. This suggests that corrective feedback can have different effects on peers and corrected learners.

Similarly, Mackey *et al.* (2000) investigated the relationship between types of feedback and different error types in dyadic situations to determine whether learners can accurately perceive corrective feedback as feedback. The learner's perceptions of corrective feedback were collected using stimulated recall protocols with two groups of ESL learners. They found that learners were accurate in recognizing lexical and phonological feedback as feedback; despite this, they did not often perceive morphosyntactic feedback as such. Mackey *et al.* claim that learners would benefit less from recasts due to the ambiguity in nature and the

difficulty learners may have in recognizing recasts as corrective feedback. Their findings suggest that both the nature and target of the feedback may affect the accuracy of learners' perception.

As claimed earlier by observational studies that corrective feedback has the potential for facilitating L2 learning; experimental studies provide further evidence that corrective feedback have a positive impact on L2 learning. This may be due to the assumption that learners can benefit from interaction (Long 1996); corrective feedback, however, provides such an opportunity for learners to be engaged in interaction, negotiating the form or meaning with teachers and peers. These studies indicate that among all corrective feedback types, recasts are found to be extensively used by teachers or interlocutors across a variety of contexts. Recasts are widely used partly because they are unlikely to interrupt the communicative flow of lessons (e.g., Ellis *et al.* 2001a). Corrective feedback can be useful for L2 learning; however, its effectiveness can depend on many factors (e.g., targeted structures, readiness of learners, and explicitness of feedback). Some studies, however, suggest that auditors gain more benefits from corrective feedback than error initiators because the latter suffer from pressure of reacting publicly (Havranek 2002). The nature and target of the feedback may also affect learners' perception on corrective feedback (Mackey *et al.* 2000).

2.4.2 Uptake

While the preceding paragraphs have examined studies on focus-on-form examining corrective feedback provided by teachers when attending to a learner error in lessons, it is also significant to consider the learners' responses (often termed uptake) to such feedback. This section, therefore, looks specifically into studies concerning uptake.

1) Frequency of uptake

Many of studies considering learner uptake have used learner's immediate

responses as a measure of uptake. For example, Lyster and Ranta (1997) have examined learner uptake following teacher's attention to form in French immersion classrooms. They found that 55% of corrective feedback led to learner uptake, with 27% of total corrective feedback resulting in repair (i.e. successful uptake). Panova and Lyster (2002) found that 47% of corrective feedback resulted in learner uptake, with the repair rate being 18%. Oliver (2000), however, reported a lower level of uptake in a study of ESL classes, with 21% occurring in the child learners and 30% in the adult learners.

In Lyster and Ranta's (1997) study, uptake can only occur after teacher's reactive focus-on-form (i.e., corrective feedback), Ellis *et al.* (2001a), however, claim that uptake is optional and can also occur after preemptive focus-on-form and student-initiated focus-on-form (see section 2.2 for definitions). In two ESL classes, they found that the rate of uptake was higher (75%) and more successful (59%) than that reported in Lyster's immersion classrooms, with the suggestion that differing contexts may account for these different results. The discrepancy between these two studies suggests the need to explore the contextual variables that may have affected the level and success of learner uptake.

In a Korean EFL setting, Sheen (2004) found 82% of corrective feedback resulted in learner uptake, with 56% of total turns with corrective feedback leading to repair of an error. It was found that learner uptake and repair were more likely to occur in Korean EFL classrooms than in French immersion classrooms (see Table 5.4 for more details). Ellis and Sheen (2006:589) argue that in classrooms in which there is a strong focus on message content (e.g., French immersion) teachers often do not allow time for students to uptake their corrective feedback, instead, to continue with topic continuation.

Like Ellis *et al.* (2001a), Loewen (2004) also considered uptake as an optional. The results showed that uptake occurred in the observed lessons at the overall rate of

73%, which was comparable to the level that identified in the study of Ellis *et al.* (2001a) and Sheen (2004). Even though the rate of uptake varied across L2 classes, the level of rate was still higher than other studies, such as Lyster and Ranta (1997; 55%).

Lyster and Ranta (1997) found that although recasts were the most frequently used technique (55%), that they were also the least likely to lead to learner uptake (31%) and repair (18%). In Lyster's (1998a) subsequent study of uptake immediately following recasts, the findings showed that recasts were mostly followed by topic continuation (69%), with a minimal number of recasts resulted in learner uptake (31%) and repair (18%) recasts (see Table 5.4 for more details).

Panova and Lyster's (2002) findings that 40% of recasts led to learner uptake, with the lower rate of learners' repair following recasts (13%) remaining low. This finding paralleled the results obtained in observational studies (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997). Ellis *et al.* (2001a) and Sheen (2004) found a higher uptake and repair rate of recasts in New Zealand (uptake=75%; repair=59%) and Korea EFL contexts (uptake=82%; repair=56%). However, elicitations and repetitions of error resulted in a higher rate of repair than recasts in a variety of contexts. Mackey and Philp (1998) found that 53% of recasts did not elicit any response, and only 5% of the responses were repaired, which was consistent with Lyster's findings of low repair rate of recasts.

The above studies demonstrated the variation in the frequency of learner uptake and repair. Whereas some observational studies (e.g., Panova and Lyster 2002) indicated corrective feedback resulted in the least amount of learner immediate repair, Sheen's (2004) demonstrated that corrective feedback led to a higher amount of immediate uptake and repair of errors in Korean EFL context than others. According to the somewhat conflicting results, some researchers suggest that the instructional contexts (such as learner age) may affect the frequency of learner

uptake and repair (e.g., Loewen 2004; Sheen 2004). To further examine factors that may possibly affect learner uptake, a number of studies have explored the variables that may influence learner's use of corrective feedback. The following section reviews studies considering variables that may have affected learner uptake and the success of it.

2) Factors may affect uptake

In addition to examining the frequency of uptake, a considerable number of studies have explored the factors that may influence learner uptake. For example, Lyster and Ranta (1997) found that recasts were the least effective in eliciting student uptake and repairs than other types of feedback. In contrast, elicitation resulted in a much higher rate of repair. They argue that feedback such as elicitation, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, and repetition is likely to lead to learner uptake because such feedback provides learners with an opportunity to correct errors they made. Subsequently, Lyster (1998b) further analyzed corrective feedback in relation to error types and learner uptake within the content-based context. Lyster (1998b) found that the type of uptake varied according to the linguistic focus of the learner errors and corrective feedback types. The negotiation of form was more effective at leading to immediate repair than recasts or explicit correction.

Ellis *et al.* (2001a) investigated to what extent the features of focus-on-form episodes influenced learner uptake, with the suggestion that the level of uptake was influenced by the characteristics (sources, directness, complexity, and linguistic features) of FFEs. They found that uptake was more likely to occur in reactive and student-initiated focus-on-form episodes, whereas teacher-initiated FFEs generated lower levels of successful uptake. They also found that FFEs containing negotiation of meaning led to more uptake than those encompassing negotiation of form. It was also found that FFEs focusing on pronunciation achieved a higher level of successful uptake.

Oliver (2000) has explored whether learner age and exchange context (teacher-fronted lesson vs. pair work) affected learner uptake. The findings indicated that learners were more likely to ignore corrective feedback in the pair-work; according to age, adult learners were more likely to uptake than child learners. Oliver claims that age and pedagogical context can result in the different pattern of uptake. Similarly, Mackey *et al.* (2003) found, in child dyads, NNS were more likely to modify their output when interacting with NNSs than NSs, lending support to Oliver's point that contextual variables can affect learner uptake in response to corrective feedback.

Besides, Mackey and Philp's (1998) study demonstrated that learners who were developmentally ready for the target form gained more benefits than those who were unready. McDonough (2005) found that the role of salience and opportunity for pushed output as important characteristics that may affect learner uptake.

Loewen (2004) explored what features of incidental focus-on-form predicted uptake and successful uptake (i.e. repair). In the study, Loewen found that features such as complexity, timing and type of feedback were significant predictors of uptake and successful uptake. Loewen argues that successful uptake may be facilitative of acquisition, even though he is aware that uptake can not considered as an evidence of acquisition. Loewen's findings provide empirical support for Swain's output hypothesis that pushed output plays a facilitative role in learning.

Much research has implied that the different types of corrective feedback may result in varied learner uptake rates. Recasts are preferred by teachers across contexts; despite this, they are less effective at prompting learner uptake (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997). Some studies have explored the relationship among error types, corrective feedback and learner uptake (e.g. Lyster 1998b) and suggest that grammatical and phonological errors appear to invite recasts and negotiation of form is more likely to result in learner uptake than others. Recasts that provide

learners with reformulation of errors do not allow learners an opportunity to modify their output, which may constitute one of the reasons why recasts lead to low uptake and repair (Mackey *et al.* 2003). By contrast, such feedback as elicitation results in higher rate of learner uptake and repair, because it always provides an opportunity for uptake to take place (Panova and Lyster 2002). The age of learners, pedagogical context and characteristics of FFEs may have an impact on uptake (Oliver 2000; Ellis *et al.* 2001a). In summary, the rate of uptake can vary across settings and be determined by a variety of factors, such as the type of corrective feedback, age of learners, pedagogical contexts, and interlocutor types.

Table 2.2 Literature review grid: empirical studies on corrective feedback and uptake (in chronological order)

STUDY & TYPE	RESEARCH FOCI	PARTICIPANTS	METHOD(S)	RELEVANT KEY FINDINGS	
				Corrective feedback	uptake
Carroll and Swain (1993) (Experimental study)	To investigate the effects of different types of corrective feedback on dative verbs.	100 Spanish adult ESL learners (low intermediate)	Two feedback sessions, recall sessions were administered immediately after the treatment session and again one week later.	1) Both explicit and implicit feedback can potentially lead to learning; 2) explicit feedback group was found to outperform all groups, including implicit group	N/A
Oliver 1995 (Observational study)	To examine recasts in interaction with NS-NNS child dyads interacting during conversation tasks	8 pairs of young (8- 13-year-old) NNS-NS dyads	Dyadic interaction was audio-recorded	1) Recasts and negotiation were employed in child interaction; 2) recasts were more likely to occur when the meaning of utterances appeared to be clear and contained only one error	N/A
Lyster and Ranta (1997) (Observational study)	To document the frequency and distribution of corrective feedback in relation to learner uptake	Four French immersion teachers and their pupils (9-10 years old)	Four teachers' lessons were observed and tape-recorded	1) Six types of corrective feedback were identified; 2) recasts were the most common type of feedback; 3) the remaining feedback occurred with roughly equal frequency.	1) Recasts were least likely to lead to learner repair; elicitation was the most successful technique for eliciting uptake; 2) In addition to elicitation, metalinguisitic feedback reported to be a powerful way of encouraging repairs
Doughy and Varela (1998) (Experimental study)	To examine the effects of corrective recasts on the acquisition of past-tense forms	34 middle school students at an intermediate ESL level	Using pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test design	Results show learners who received the corrective recasts improved more that those in control group who received no systematic corrective feedback	N/A
Lyster (1998a) (Observational study)	To examine whether different types of recasts could draw learners' attention to notice the errors	Four French immersion teachers and their pupils (9-10 years old)	Four teachers' lessons were observed and tape-recorded	1) Recasts were classified into four types; 2) recasts were ambiguous in nature; 3) Learners may have experienced difficulty in acknowledging what was corrective feedback	1) The pattern of uptake could vary in terms of the linguistic focus of the error and the type of the feedback employed

STUDY & TYPE	RESEARCH FOCI	PARTICIPATNS	METHOD(S)	RELEVANT KEY FINDINGS	
				Corrective feedback	Uptake
Lyster (1998b) (Observational study)	To explore the relationship among error types, feedback types, and immediate learner repair	Four French immersion teachers and their pupils (9-10 years old)	Four teachers' lessons were observed and tape-recorded	1) Grammatical and phonological errors tended to invite recasts, whereas lexical errors tended to invite negotiation of form; 2) The majority of phonological repairs were learner repetitions following recasts and the majority of grammatical and lexical repairs was peer and self-repairs following negotiation of form	1) The negotiation of form proved to be more effective at leading to immediate repair; 2) recasts resulted in the lowest rate of uptake and repair;
Long *et al.* (1998) (Experimental study)	To compare the impact of models with recasts on L2 development	1) 24 young adult learners of Japanese; 2) 30 young adult undergraduate of L2 Spanish	1) pretest-posttest control group design; 2) participants played a communication game with an NS interlocutor	1) Recasts played a facilitative role in L2 acquisition; 2) Spanish adverb placement group gained greater improvement; 3) no significant improvements were identified in the remaining targeted forms	N/A
Mackey and Philp (1998) (Experimental study)	To examine the impact of recasts on question formation in English	35 adult ESL learners with mixed L1 background (beginner and lower inter-mediate)	1) Pre-test and post-test control group design; 2) participants completed information gaps with an NS interlocutor	1) Recasts had a positive effect on question development; 2) advanced learners were more beneficial from recasts; 3) recasts resulted in low repair rate	1) 33% of recasts were repeated or modified, whereas the remaining 67% of recasts were followed by topic continuation.
Oliver (2000) (Observational study)	To examine whether the age of learners and the context of interaction affects the provision and use of feedback	1) 10 adult and 10 child ESL classrooms: 20 teachers and their intact classes 2) 32 NS-NNS dyads (16 adult and 16 child)	1) Researchers were audio- and video-recorded teaching two lessons; 2) dyads worked on a one-way and a two-way task;	1) Corrective feedback was provided to and used by learners; 2) the age and the context of the interaction may affect the provision of corrective feedback	1) The age of learners and the context of exchange may affect the production of uptake

STUDY & TYPE	RESEARCH FOCI	PARTICIPATNS	METHOD(S)	RELEVANT KEY FINDINGS	
				Corrective feedback	Uptake
Mackey *et al.* (2000) (Observational study)	To investigate whether or not learners can accurately perceive corrective feedback	10 ESL learners and 7 learners of Italian as a foreign language at the low-intermediate level of language	The participants were video-recorded when carrying out task-based dyadic interaction; they watched video tapes to introspect about their thought when their interlocutors provided corrective feedback	Learners were accurate in recognizing lexical and phonological feedback as feedback but did not often perceive morphosyntactic feedback as feedback.	N/A
Samuda (2001) (Observational study)	It focuses on the interplay among features of task design and features of instructional strategy as a task unfolds.	An intact class of high-beginning/low-intermediate adult ESL students (N=9) with an average age of 22.	The lessons were observed and recorded and samples of student writing were collected over a semester.	1) Among all corrective feedback, 73% responded to errors relating to form, 27% to errors relating to meaning; 2) when attending to form, 60% of her moves was repetition; when attending to problems with meaning, 82% was implicit corrective feedback	N/A
Ellis *et al.* (2001a) (Observational study)	To investigate learner uptake in incidental focus-on-form episodes	Two intact classrooms with two teachers and 24 young adult (18-21 years old) ESL learners (low-intermediate to intermediate)	Classroom observation and audio recordings of the lessons (14 hours from 10 ESL lessons (5 lessons from each class)	1) Three types of FFEs were identified; 2) recasts were widely used by ESL teachers; 3) focus-on-form can occur without disturbing the communicative flow of classroom	1) uptake was optional 2) the rate of uptake was as high as 73.9% 3) differing contexts may have an impact on the level and success of uptake
Havranek (2002) (Experimental study)	To examine factors influencing the success of corrective feedback	270 EFL learners and eight teachers; Learners aged from 10-year-old beginners to undergraduates specializing in English	For each group, 6-8 consecutive classes were observed and audio-recorded; subsequent language tests were employed	1) More than 50% of error initiators correctly use the same structure in the tests; compared to 61% peers correctly used the same structure in the test; 2) peers were less likely to repeat the same error but made more new errors than those corrected	N/A

STUDY & TYPE	RESEARCH FOCI	PARTICIPATNS	METHOD(S)	RELEVANT KEY FINDINGS	
				Corrective feedback	Uptake
Panova and Lyster (2002) (Observational study)	To examine the relationship between types of corrective feedback and learner uptake	A class of 25 ESL learners (17 -55 years old)	Classroom observation and audio recordings of the lessons	1) Recasts occurred with the highest frequency; 2) translation was the second frequently used corrective feedback	1) Rates of learner uptake and immediate repair of errors were low in this classroom; 2) recasts achieved the lowest rate of repair
Braidi (2002) (Experimental study)	To examine the occurrence and use of recasts in NS-NNS interaction	10 adult NS of English and 10 adult Japanese learners were randomly assigned to 10 NS-NNS gender-shared dyads	1) Each dyads completed four communication tasks for approximately one hour; 2) all tasks were audio-taped	1) Recasts existed in NS-NNS interaction with varied occurrence in terms of type of negotiation and errors; 2) recasts accounted for 15.45% of total NS corrective feedback; 3)9.5% recasts led to repair.	N/A
Mackey *et al.* (2003) (Observational study)	To explore whether the age of learners and the type of interaction affect the amount and nature of corrective feedback and learner uptake.	1) 48 adult participants (36 NNS and 12 NS); 2) 48 child participants (36 NNS and 12 NS)	1) Each dyads worked on two tasks (a one-way and a two-way task); 2) transcriptions were made of the first 100 utterances in each task and were chosen for analysing	1) No significant age differences in terms of amount of feedback; 2) NS interlocutors in both age groups were more likely to provide corrective feedback in response to errors than NNSs; 3) the feedback from adult NNSs was more likely to offer opportunities for uptake than NSs	1) child NNSs produced significantly more modified output in response to feedback from NNSs than NSs
Loewen (2003) (Observational study)	To compare the frequency and characteristics of incidental focus-on-form across classrooms	12 intact ESL classrooms with 12 teachers and 118 young adult learners in New Zealand	Classroom observation and audio recordings of the lessons (32 hours)	1)Teacher's beliefs about focus-on-form may effect the frequency and characteristics of focus-on-form; 2) The types of the tasks may also play a role in the variation of focus-on-form	N/A

STUDY & TYPE	RESEARCH FOCI	PARTICIPATNS	METHOD(S)	RELEVANT KEY FINDINGS	
				Corrective feedback	Uptake
Leeman (2003) (Experimental study)	The effects of recasts on the acquisition of noun-adjective agreement in Spanish	74 first-year undergraduate L2 learners of Spanish	1) pre-test, immediate post-test and delayed post-test design; 2) three experimental groups and one control group; 3) participants performed one-way tasks with a researcher	1) Recasts and salience of positive evidence group outperformed the control group on posttest measure; 2) no significance was identified between recasts and salience of positive evidence group 3) no significant differences were found between group negative evidence group and control group	N/A
Loewen (2004) (Experimental study)	To determine what features of corrective feedback predicted uptake and successful uptake	12 intact ESL classrooms with 12 teachers and 118 young adult learners in New Zealand	Classroom observation were audio-recorded	N/A	1) The complexity, timing and type of corrective feedback were significant predictors of uptake and the successfulness of it.
Sheen (2004) (Observational study)	To compare the similarities and differences in corrective feedback and learner uptake across four settings.	Two classrooms with two teachers and adult Korean EFL learners (29-36 years old) with varied proficiency levels	Classroom observation and audio recordings of the lessons; using existing data from other studies	1) Recasts were the most frequently used corrective feedback among the four settings; 2) recasts were more frequent in Korean EFL and New Zealand ESL than in Canadian ESL and immersion	1) The rates of uptake and repair were greater in New Zealand and Korean settings than in the Canadian settings.
Lyster (2004) (Experimental study)	The effects of corrective feedback on grammatical gender in French	Four teachers and their 10-11-year-old students (n=148)	Two feedback groups (with prompt, recasts) and one control group (no feedback); pre-test, immediate post-test and delayed post-test were used.	1) students that exposed to corrective feedback showed a significant increase in ability to correctly assign French gender in either oral or written tests	1) Corrective feedback with prompts was more effective than with recasts or no feedback

STUDY & TYPE	RESEARCH FOCI	PARTICIPATNS	METHOD(S)	RELEVANT KEY FINDINGS	
				Corrective feedback	Uptake
Loewen (2005) (Experimental study)	To examine the relationship between corrective feedback and L2 learning	12 intact ESL classrooms with 12 teachers and 118 young adult learners in New Zealand	Classroom observation and audio recordings of the lessons (32 hours); the subsequent test of learners' ability to recall the targeted linguistic items	Corrective feedback may be beneficial to learners	1) successful uptake was one of the major predictor of learners' subsequent accurate test scores
McDonough (2005) (Experimental study)	The impact of corrective feedback on EFL learners' question development.	1) 60 NSs of Thai at university level and; 2) 5 native speakers of English interactors	Participants were equally but randomly assigned into four treatment groups; pre-tests and post-tests were used.	1) The advanced question forms were developed significantly; 2) clarification requests may indirectly contribute to question development.	N/A
Ellis *et al.* (2006) (Experimental study)	The impact of implicit and explicit corrective feedback on the acquisition of past tense (-ed).	34 low-intermediate ESL learners (mean age=25) with varied L1 from a private language school	A Pre-test and an immediate post-test and a delayed post-test were used	1) The metalinguistic feedback group outperformed both the recasts and control groups on tests 2) corrective feedback benefited implicit and explicit knowledge	N/A
Ellis 2007 (Experimental study)	To compare the effects of implicit (recasts) and explicit feedback on past tense (-ed) and comparative (-er)	Three classes of students (N=34) in a private language school. Participants were low intermediate ESL learners, whose mean age was 25.	Participants carried out communicative tasks. Using pre-test, immediate post-test and delayed post-test design	1) Only the metalinguistic feedback was reported to be effective in promoting acquisition of both structures 2) metalinguistic group showed greater gains for comparative '-er' than past tense	N/A

2.4.3 A summary of previous studies

Empirical studies have demonstrated that focus-on-form instructions may play a beneficial role in L2 learning. Several linguistic forms have been targeted in a number of studies, including dative verbs (Carroll and Swain 1993), French grammatical gender (Lyster 2004), adverb placement in Spanish (Long *et al.*1998), noun-adjective gender agreement in Spanish (Leeman, 2003), past tense in English (Ellis *et al.* 2006), as well as question development in English (e.g. Mackey & Philp, 1998). Researchers to date have used four major ways to measure the effectiveness of focus-on-form on language acquisition: i) uptake and learner repair (e.g., Lyster and Ranta, 1997); ii) immediate post-tests (e.g., Carroll and Swain, 1993); iii) delayed post-tests (e.g., Doughty and Varela, 1998); and iv) stimulated recall to identify learner's noticing of corrective feedback (e.g., Mackey *et al.*, 2000).

Some studies involve weaknesses in design, for example, in Carroll and Swain's (1993) study, the period between the two recall sessions was rather short; therefore, their study failed to provide any evidence for long-term improvement of acquiring dative alternation rule in English. Lyster (2004) administrated their post-tests two months later, in which all treatment groups demonstrated a significant long-term improvement over the control group on seven of the eight delayed tests. Nevertheless, Lyster (2004) did not examine metalinguistic feedback separately from other types of non-explicit feedback (such as repetition) designed to elicit the correct form. Another weakness lies in the fact that most of studies chose one or two structures to determine the effects of corrective feedback on the targeted feature(s). In this way, they were unable to determine whether corrective feedback was effective for another structure. Also the length of treatments was generally short (one hour or so). The effects of corrective feedback may be different if we extend the process of treatments.

The model of Lyster and Ranta (1997) has been adapted to investigate focus-on-form in a range of classroom contexts, including French immersion (Lyster and Ranta 1997; Lyster 1998b), ESL classroom (Panova and Lyster 2002) and EFL (Sheen 2004). These researchers have used uptake and repair of learner error as a measure of potential effectiveness of corrective feedback (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997). Mackey and Philp (1998), however, claim that learning is possible without the production of uptake according to their experimental study's findings that successful uptake (i.e., repair) is not necessary an indicator of acquisition. Nevertheless, Sheen (2004) argues that uptake and repair may suggest that learners at least notice the feedback. According to Schmidt (1990; 1995), noticing is necessary for learning to take place; uptake has been closed associated with noticing. As claimed by Lightbown, (2000:447), uptake is "evidence that learners are noticing the feedback". Accordingly, Nassaji (2007) claims that immediate repair contributes to language acquisition. Empirically, some studies (e.g., Loewen 2005) demonstrate that successful uptake is one of the major predictors of learners' subsequent accurate test scores. Although a number of researchers argue that uptake cannot be viewed as an evidence of acquisition (e.g., Ellis *et al.* 2001a), some researchers do believe that uptake create conditions for acquisition to occur (e.g., Lyster and Ranta, 1997; Swain 1985, 1995). For example, Lyster and Ranta (1997) claim that uptake help learner practice using items and thus may help them to automatize retrieval of them. Nevertheless, Ellis *et al.* (2001a) claim it would be necessary to demonstrate that the learners possess the autonomous ability to use the feature correctly on subsequent occasions without prompting in order to obtain evidence of acquisition. The issue whether or not uptake can be used as a measure of the effectiveness of corrective feedback is still under debate. Further research regarding uptake is required.

Corrective feedback has drawn a great deal of attention since the past two decades. There are a number of observational studies and some studies in an experimental setting that have examined the types of corrective feedback provided by the

teachers and the extent to which this feedback was noticed or responded by the learners. In the search of literature on corrective feedback and learner uptake, the following issues have been addressed:

- the impact of corrective feedback on L2 acquisition/learning (e.g., Carroll and Swain 1993; Ellis *et al.* 2006);
- the relationship between corrective feedback and learner uptake (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997; Lyster 1998b);
- recasts and L2 learning (e.g., Mackey and Philp 1998; Long *et al.* 1998); these studies look specifically into recasts as a form of corrective feedback;
- variables that may have an impact on the provision and use of corrective feedback (e.g., Oliver 2000; Mackey *et al.* 2003);
- learner perception about corrective feedback (e.g., Mackey *et al.* 2000)

In this section, I have reviewed studies on corrective feedback and learner uptake that have been undertaken from different perspectives and with different research methodology and by a number of researchers. Below, I discuss the gaps in knowledge that I have identified and perceived to be worth investigating.

2.5 Gaps in knowledge

The review of literature helps me to locate gaps in the field which can inspire my own research. Firstly, as indicated above, reviewed studies have predominantly demonstrated interaction that provides corrective feedback may play a facilitative role in L2 learning. However, fewer studies of corrective feedback have been done in classroom settings, with majority having been undertaken in experimental settings. Methodologically, they mostly used pre-test-post-test design. The main problem with this is that the L2 learning thus found in the laboratory settings are not necessarily connected to classroom interaction, a discrepancy can therefore arise between the practice of focus-on-form in the experimental settings and in actual classroom practices. The review of Nicholas *et al.* (2001) notes that "recasts appear to provide more useful input to learners in laboratory setting than in the classroom setting". This suggests that there could be some significant differences in

the practice of focus-on-form between classroom and laboratory. Much research has been done experimentally; more studies to explore actual practice of focus-on-form in natural classrooms are demanded.

Secondly, in interaction, recasts have been reported to occur with relatively high frequency across various settings among adults and young children. Nevertheless, the rates of repair following recasts vary considerably, with lower rate being discovered in Canada French immersion lessons (Lyster and Ranta) and German ESL classrooms (Havranek 2002), and higher rates being reported in New Zealand ESL (Ellis *et al.* 2001a), Japanese EFL (Braidi 2002), Korean EFL (Sheen 2004). There is a dearth of research in whether or not recasts are preferred and can effectively elicit learner uptake in China EFL contexts.

Thirdly, there is growing awareness that some variables, including the age of learner, the type of interlocutors, the interactional context, may affect the provision and use of corrective feedback. For example, Oliver (2000) found that learner age and interactional context played a role in the provision and use of feedback. Mackey *et al.* (2003) found that interlocutor type and learner age may affect the nature of corrective feedback and uptake in response to it. Oliver (2000) and Mackey *et al.* (2003) have made a direct comparison of the provision and incorporation of feedback in task-based interaction between adults and children. Neither of them compares the corrective feedback and uptake in classrooms of child learners with different proficiency levels. There is thus much room for empirical studies undertaken in instructional settings to investigate corrective feedback and learner uptake in China EFL context and to compare and contrast differing pedagogical practices between different classrooms.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have located my study in focus-on-form instruction literature and have explicated the definitions of focus-on-form, corrective feedback and learner

uptake that I use in this study. I have also argued the important roles that corrective feedback and learner uptake may play in L2 learning, and reviewed previous research considering corrective feedback and uptake. Finally, I have summarized the main insights gained from the reviewed literature and pointed out gaps in current knowledge.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction: why methodology chapter

Silverman claims that all research reports have a methodology chapter or at least a section devoted to 'data and methods'. In it, researchers are expected to show that what they understand the strengths and weaknesses of the research strategy, design and methods (Silverman 2005). Internally, I wish to share a methodological decision with the readers through this chapter in which I explicate the actual course of my decision making and demonstrate the trajectory of the project. I move from a general discussion of my philosophical position to detailed descriptions of rationale for the research design and methods for data collection and analysis used in the research. This chapter also discusses ethical issues arising in the conduct of the study. The last section assesses the quality of designing and conducting this research.

3.2 Ontological/epistemological/philosophical position

> It is good medicine, we think, for researchers to make their preferences clear. To know how a researcher construes the shape of the social world and aims to give us a credible account of it is to know our conversational partner (Miles and Huberman 1994: 4).

It should be clear that how we think the social world is constituted, or what we think it is shapes how we think we can know about it, but conversely how we look shapes what we can see. Even when we decide to use qualitative and/or quantitative methods, we involve ourselves in theoretical as well as methodological decisions (Mason 2002). These decisions relate not only to how we conceptualize the world but also to our theory of how our research subjects think about things (Silverman 2005). Ontology is the study of being. It is concerned with 'what is', with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such. Each theoretical perspective embodies a certain way of understanding what is (ontology) as well as a certain way of understanding what it means to know (epistemology) (Crotty 1998: 10). Constructionism is an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies

that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision (Bryman 2004). Interpretivism is a term given to a contrasting epistemology to positivism. It denotes an alternative to the positivist orthodoxy that has held sway for decades. It is predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action (Crotty 1998). My philosophical stance probably most closely aligns with what has been called constructionism/interpretivism. In terms of ontology, it claims that there is no objective truth waiting for us to discover it. Truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world. There is no meaning without a mind. Meaning is not discovered, but constructed. In this understanding of knowledge, it is clear that different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon (Crotty 1998).

Constructionism is

> "the view that all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such, it contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty 1998:42).

Blaikie (2000:115) claims that interpretivists are concerned with understanding the social world people have produced and which they reproduce through their continuing activities. This everyday reality consists of the meanings and interpretations given by the social actors to their actions, other people's actions, social situations, and natural and humanly created objects. In short, in order to negotiate their way around their world and make sense of it, social actors have to interpret their activities together, and it is these meanings, embedded in language, that constitute their social reality. Personally, I agree with Miles and Huberman's (1994) argument that interpretivists who point out that knowledge is a social and historical product and that 'fact' come to us laden with theory. They affirm the existence and importance of the subjective, the phenomenological, and the

meaning-making at the centre of social life. Their aim is to register and "transcend" these processes by building theories to account for a real world that is both bounded and perceptually laden, and to test these theories in our various discipline (Miles and Huberman 1994). Glasersfeld (1995:14) argues that:

> "From the constructivist perspective, learning is not a stimulus-response phenomenon; it requires self-regulation and the building of conceptual structures through reflection and abstraction".

In this paradigm, learning emphasizes the process and not the product. Learning is a process of constructing meaningful representations, of making sense of one's experiential world. In this process, students' errors are seen in a positive light and as a means of gaining insight into how they are organizing their experiential world. The notion of doing something 'right' or 'correctly' is to do something that fits with "an order one has established oneself" (Von Glasersfeld, 1987: 15).

I assume the issue of focus-on-form instruction is ontologically meaningful and epistemological explainable in meaning-focused classes. The constructivism position underlies several assumptions I made upon conducting the investigation of focus-on-form instruction in EFL lessons. First, I assume that learner errors are associated with learning. Focus-on-form instruction can be expressed, discussed and examined. I also assume that errors provide the opportunities for insight into students' previous knowledge constructions. Further, I assume that teachers provide corrective feedback for their pupils to facilitate learning. In addition, I assume that opportunities are provided to encourage learner uptake.

This is my research positioning. This work is based on the interaction and output hypotheses; the former proposes that learners need to participate overtly in interaction of a certain quality and the latter proposes that learners can benefit in particular ways from their own language output (Breen 2001). I use interaction and output hypothesis as a theoretical positioning in this piece of research even though I am fully aware of the complexity of classroom interaction. I recognize that interaction and output hypothesis are viable but too simplistic to understand

language use in the classroom. Classroom interaction in effect is inter-textual and multi-functional (Breen 2001). I am also aware that SLA is not the only way to understand language and that language use is complex rather than straightforward as claimed by proponents of the interaction and output hypothesis. I acknowledge that classroom discourse is not a static product to be analysed; on the contrary, it is holistic, collaborative, and dynamic (Ellis 2003).

The interaction hypothesis assumes that repair sequences are crucial for language learning; however, it fails to demonstrate that the classroom interaction that proceeds without any communication problem can also be beneficial for language learning (Ellis 2003). In addition, the interaction hypothesis fails to show that overt participation is not necessary for acquisition (Breen 2001). The output hypothesis discusses three functions of output in L2 learning: consciousness-raising about students' problems, hypotheses testing about the L2 as well as conscious reflection about L2 forms (Swain 1995). The output hypothesis asserts that output is facilitating L2 learning because it pushes learners to modify their output; however, it fails to demonstrate that a learner's output does not necessarily result in L2 learning; nor does it indicate that L2 learning is possible without output. Even though this work is placed within the traditional SLA research strand, I am aware that classroom interaction is not as simplistic as claimed by cognitivist approaches. I am fully aware that classroom interaction is complex, multifaceted and not necessarily always as simplistic and straightforward as some advocates of this traditional SLA strands would have proposed. In addition to a pedagogic purpose that interaction serves in the classroom, it also serves a social purpose in the classroom where cultural and situational factors have a particular function and identity. Interaction and output hypothesis overlook the socio-affective significance of the data on which they rely and of the contexts from which they obtain such data (Breen 2001).

3.3 Pilot study

In 2006, a pilot study was conducted through classroom observation and interviews to examine focus-on-form instructions at two primary EFL schools in China. The pilot study was used to test, revise and finalize the research design of this study. The results showed that the two participant teachers attended to learner errors in EFL lessons. With response to corrective feedback, learners were fully involved through peer-scaffolding/correcting and self-correcting. The pilot study demonstrated the potential for focus-on-form instruction to inform pupils of the gap between their inter-language and the target forms that they were aiming for. Thus, pupils may be more aware of their own attainment and the direction for further improvement. Meanwhile, it may have helped teachers to adjust the teaching focus in order to cater for learners' needs. The pilot study indicated that the focus-on-form instruction was meaningful and explainable in China's EFL lessons.

Furthermore, I learned much from my pilot study. After the pilot study, I was more confident with the credibility of my main study. I was more aware of the parameters of the setting and population of sample. I was more clear of the boundaries around the study by ensuring the participants were accurately identified and described. After the pilot study, I was more confident that a class of students and teacher can be investigated as participants and their contribution in lessons can be observed and recorded. I was more sensitive to ethical issues. The pilot study has contributed to the development of the research questions, which are discussed in the following section.

3.4 The research design and conduct

The study involved case study strategy and two data collection methods (i.e. non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews). I use strategy to refer to general plans that aim to answer research questions, and by methods I mean specific ways of collecting data. Thus, for example, case study would be a strategy while interviews would be a data collection method. The decisions about strategy

and methods were partly guided by the aims and objectives of this study; strategy and methods should fit the research questions.

3.4.1 Case study strategy

This study took a case study approach, which was advocated by a number of researchers (e.g., Cohen *et al.* 2000). As a form of research, case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used. As Cohen and Mansion claim, the purpose of case study is:

> "to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalization about the wider population to which that unit belongs" (Cohen & Mansion 1994: 106).

Focus-on-form instruction in China's EFL context is of my great interests; however, due to limited time and space, I may not be able to sample every member of the population. Case study strategy, which attempts to account for context and allows in-depth exploration, is therefore of my choice.

I chose a case study strategy to seek answers to my research questions because I wanted to look at some particular teachers' provision of corrective feedback as well as some particular pupils' responses in the process in a natural setting. These aims of the research resonate with the notion of case study advocated by Cohen *et al.* (2000:181) who argue:

> "It provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles… Further, contexts are unique and dynamics, hence case studies investigate and report the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance."

This study attempts to describe an existing phenomenon; it is therefore descriptive in nature. As indicated by Yin (1993), descriptive case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context. The suitability of case study for investigating phenomena in context is widely recognized (Marshall and Rossman 1995; Stake 1995; Marshall and Rossman 1999; Stake 2000; Bogdan and Biklen

2003; Yin 2003). Case study is emphasized by some researchers because it draws attention to the question of what specifically can be learned from the single case (Stake, 1994). Additionally, the study intends to examine a particular case to give an insight into an issue which is commensurate with Stake's (2000) definition of instrumental case study. Freebody argues:

> "Case study focuses on one particular instance of educational experience and attempts to gain theoretical and professional in sight from a full documentation of that instance" (Freebody 2003:81).

Case study methodologies stress that teachers are always teaching some subject matter, with some particular learners, in particular places and under conditions that significantly shape and temper teaching and learning practices (Freebody 2003).

I defined a case as a teacher delivering English lessons to her/his learners for some period of time. Corrective feedback by definition occurs with strategies that teachers employ to attend to learner errors in EFL classes. Corrective feedback and learner uptake occur in a specific context, and my definition of the case reflects this. Bounding the case in this way also allows me to compare cases (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003) as an analytic tactic. Given the same course and a similar set of contextual factors, how are teachers similar or different in their provision of corrective feedback and how are their learners' responses? Within a case study framework, a methodological triangulation was established by employing non-participant observation and interview, in that it offered an opportunity to remedy limitations inherent in each method. I have chosen two case studies, in which two classes were observed and then compared and contrasted.

3.4.2 Research questions

The study reported on here focuses on the strategies that teachers employ when learners, who have English as a foreign language, produce errors in class as well as learners' responses following corrective feedback. Detailed research questions are listed as follows:

RQ1: To what extent are the types of learner errors different between the two

classes?

RQ2: To what extent is the provision of corrective feedback to learner errors different between the two classes?

1) To what extent is the total number of corrective feedback different?
2) To what extent is teachers' tendency different (i.e. what kinds of errors they tend to ignore, what sort they appear to correct)?
3) To what extent is teachers' preference for corrective feedback types different?
4) To what extent are the opportunities for using corrective feedback different?

RQ3: To what extent is learner uptake different between the two classes?

RQ4: To what extent are learner errors, corrective feedback related to learner uptake?

3.4.3 Sampling and gaining access

Qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people, nested in their context and studied in-depth (Miles and Huberman 1994). As suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), sampling in qualitative research involves two actions that sometimes pull in different directions. First, boundaries are set: to define aspects of the case(s) within the limits of available time and means connecting directly the research questions and scope of the study. Second, at the same time, a frame is created to uncover, confirm, or qualify the basic processes or constructs of the study (Miles and Huberman 1994). Many researchers advocate using multiple-case studies (e.g., Bogdan and Biklen 2003). Yin (1993) argues that multiple-case sampling adds confidence to findings, by pointing out multiple-case studies can strengthen the precision, the validity, and the stability of the findings. Yin (1993) further claims that, by looking at a range of similar and contrasting cases, we can understand a single-case finding, grounding it by specifying how and where and, if possible, why it carries on as it does. Yin (2003) explains that multiple-case designs allow a replication logic that single-case designs do not; the analysis can then be

informed by similarities and differences across cases. Similarly, Miles & Huberman (1994:29), calling this "comparable case sampling," include this in their list of strategies that can boost confidence in the analysis on the grounds of representativeness.

One aim of this study was to compare the practice of focus-on-form between different classrooms delivered by different teachers; I therefore wanted to involve more than one teacher teaching the same course-English. This was also because I thought a multiple-case design would be much stronger than a single-case design. Given these criteria, I approached a teacher at a primary school that was geographically conveniently accessible to me. She expressed willingness to participate in my fieldwork. I also asked her if she knew of any other teachers in the school would be willing to participate. She helped connect me to the second teacher. Originally, I proposed to follow three teachers in case of dropouts; later on I was aware that I was unable to observe three classrooms simultaneously as their lessons would overlap from time to time if I followed three. As a result, I only observed two classrooms; fortunately, neither of them dropped out. I also got permission from the headmaster of the school. Both teachers were articulate and eager to discuss their work. They were willing to spend time after their class for following interviews or discussion. Participant teachers, learners and their parents signed the consent forms before they let me observe their classes (for Participant consent forms, see Appendix 4).

3.4.4 Participants

This study was carried out in China, where English as a foreign language instruction was provided to all school children from Grade 3 (some school starts from Grade 1) to the end of secondary school. This instruction, in accordance with guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education of China, tends not to focus on formal aspects of language other than vocabulary. A primary school in Zhejiang, China, was selected as a site for data collection. All the teachers and learners

shared the same first language (L1) – Chinese. Two female teachers and 71 pupils participated in the study. Both teachers were selected on the basis of their willingness to have their lessons observed and audio-recorded. One of these classes was Grade 5 (class one), and the other was Grade 6 (class two). Each class has 36 and 35 pupils respectively. All pupils from each class shared the amount and type of prior exposure to English (start from Grade 1). Participant pupils aged 11-13. Teacher one, who was in charge of Grade 5, had been teaching full-time at the primary school for 2.5 years. She had a college degree. Teacher two, who was currently pursuing her master's degree, had been teaching English full-time in that school for 12.5 years.

3.4.5 Data collection methods

A methodology refers to the choices we make about cases to study, methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis, etc.., in planning and executing a research study. My methodology defines how one will go about studying any phenomenon (Silverman 2005). Methodology has a more philosophical meaning, and usually refers to the approach or paradigm that underpins the research (Blaxter *et al.* 2006). Methods are specific research techniques (Silverman 2005:99), which can be understood to relate principally to the tools of data collection or analysis; techniques such as questionnaires and interviews (Blaxter *et al.* 2006). Within a case study framework, I employed two specific data collection methods: non-participant observation and semi-structured interview. Below, I discuss the rationale and how these were implemented in practice.

1) Non-participant observation

Somekh (2005) claims that observation is one of the most important methods of data collection; what is observed is ontologically determined, that is it depends to a very great extent on how the observer conceptualizes the world and his or her place within it. My philosophical stance is constructionism, which claims that meaning is constructed rather than discovered; different people may construct meaning in

different ways. My starting point assumption is that the practice of focus-on-form is constructed through interaction between the teacher and learners in the classroom. Under the influence of his/her particular background, the observer might interpret teacher-learner interaction in a specific way. Part of the importance of observation in my study is connected to my focus of the study. With a record of what is happening in the classroom, I can seek answers to my research questions. Observation entails being present in a situation and making a record of one's impressions of what takes place (Jones and Somekh 2005). Non-participant observation is a mainstay tactic for data collection in case study research (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003), and research relating to focus-on-form that consists of corrective feedback and learner uptake usually invests in classroom observation (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997). Non-participant observation means researchers observe activities without engaging in them directly. This leaves them free to take notes and to make tape recordings during the observation itself. In the SLA (second language acquisition) field, non-participant observations are usually referred to as longitudinal case studies (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991). In this study, the classroom observation aimed to provide information on:

1) What kinds of errors happen in class? Are there any differences between two classes in terms of learner errors, relating to RQ1
2) How corrective feedback is provided; what sort of errors do teachers tend to correct; what sort of errors do they tend to ignore; do both teachers have preferred corrective feedback types; do both teachers provide an opportunity for learner uptake to take place when attending to form; any difference between the two classes, relating to RQ2
3) What sorts of strategies pupils adopt in response to teachers' corrective feedback; any difference between two classes, relating to RQ3
4) To what extent are error types, corrective feedback related to learner uptake? what forms of corrective feedback appears to lead to learner uptake; what kinds of errors are more likely to result in learner uptake, relating to RQ4

I observed the teachers' classes by arriving a few minutes before class, moving a chair to the back of the classroom and sitting (I discussed my position with the teachers beforehand). I would describe the layout of the classroom before explaining why I chose to sit at the back. The layout of classroom in which the research was undertaken was as follows: there were three rows of desks, following the length of the classroom; at each desk there were two pupils who faced the teacher and the blackboard. I sat at the opposite end of the classroom to the teacher behind the pupils. I chose to sit at the back firstly because I thought it was the only place where I would not block pupils. Secondly, I believed it helped eliminate the effect of my presence to the minimum since pupils may forget or ignore my presence and behave as they normally did. However, the potential problem of position was that I was unable to see the pupils' faces, but my field notes could supplement what I could not see from my seat.

Participant teachers briefly introduced me to their pupils when I was doing my pilot study, which I thought was a suitable way. So I asked the participant teachers to do the same way in this study. In the pilot study, I did not manage to get consent to being videoed since they were afraid that video camera might distract pupils' attention from classroom activities. I used a digital audio-recorder to record lessons instead and it turned out audio-recording data was sufficient for my research. Therefore, rather than ask for consent to being videoed, I used a digital audio-tape recorder and observation sheets instead (Appendix1) to record lessons in the study. I managed to get their consent to being audio-taped in the study.

To record the whole class interaction, a digital audio-recorder was used in each class. An observation sheet helped me identify which pupil was speaking in the interaction since I noted down the time showing on the audio-recorder when the teacher shifted from one pupil to another. With the help of the observation sheet and audio recorder, I managed to transcribe the data from the classroom observation. Although I was sitting at the back, the recorder picked up teachers and

learners' voice and the quality of sound was good enough for me to transcribe. Teachers were informed that the purpose of the study was to examine classroom interaction during EFL lessons. However, they were not made known of the precise focus of the study. Teachers were asked to act as they normally did during their lessons. I had not instructed the two teachers to use any particular kinds of corrective feedback nor to focus on any particular type of error. I asked them to continue with their usual way of teaching as I observed and audio-taped; they knew only that I was interested in recording classroom interaction. The students knew that they were being recorded, but in order to minimize any self-consciousness or anxiety they were not asked to hold a microphone or to speak deliberately in the direction of the tape recorder. It was hoped that the recordings would thereby capture the most 'normal' classroom interaction. I audio-recorded lessons and made handwritten field notes (see Appendix 2 for an example of the field notes I took) of my observations whilst the tape was recording. This enabled me to record visual data that might otherwise be lost if I relied on the audiotape alone. I chose to collect data in the way that I did because it was appropriate to the study of situated action. Audiotapes provide detailed record talk which field notes alone cannot provide. I had audiotapes, transcripts and field notes which gave me limitless opportunities to return to my original data and redefine the categories as the analysis progressed. To assist in the data collection phase, I kept a field diary to record my own thinking, feeling, experiences and perceptions throughout the research process (Creswell, 2003).

It should be noted that my presence did have an influence on their regular practices; sometimes it was obvious. For example, CT2[1] (classroom teacher 2) would occasionally come over to me and talk with me during the class, usually to give me personal information of pupils. In addition, one teacher admitted that she felt she was more prepared for the class because she knew I was recording her class. Based on the teachers' acknowledgement, my presence had an influence on the learners'

[1] F or the sake of anonymity, I use the abbreviations CT1 and CT2 to refer to Classroom teacher one and two.

behaviour as well. The teachers said that learners were being more engaged in classroom activities and were better disciplined in class than usual. According to pupils' opinions, my presence did not influence their classroom activities. The only effect was that the teachers did not criticize them as frequently as usual, which they actually appreciated.

Regarding the observer effect, in response, I would argue that a) my ongoing presence in the classroom (I attended 16 of CT1's 21 classes and 18 of CT2's 20 classes within 10 weeks) helped offset some possible problems. The length of the fieldwork was 10 weeks, I would argue that it was difficult to sustain innovatory practice for 10-week long, considering that teachers had other responsibilities to fulfil. Additionally, I believed that sustained observation allowed me time to get a good idea of the teachers' typical classroom practices and to build rapport with teachers and pupils. Teachers and children can become accustomed to my presence. b) If teachers were more prepared for their lessons, criticizing less, and pupils were more actively engaging in classroom activities, which in effect, seemed to be the positive effects rather than negative sides of the study. In order to ensure data reliability, I transcribed the collected data as soon as practical, and came to teachers and pupils for certain clarification.

2) Semi-structured interviews

The interview is one of the main data collection tools in qualitative research (Mason 2002; Punch 2005). I chose interviews because my ontological position suggested that people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions were meaningful properties of the social reality which my research questions were designed to explore. Also my epistemological position suggested that a legitimate way to generate data on these ontological properties was to talk interactively with people, to ask them questions, to listen to them, to gain access to their accounts and articulations (Mason 2002:63-4). I assumed that it was possible to investigate puzzles of the social by asking people to talk, and to gather

knowledge by listening to and integrating what they said and to how they said it. Also, I assumed that focus-on-form practices were processes of social construction and practices which were fluid, negotiated and contextual. I chose interviews as a data collection method because I treated interviews as a site of knowledge construction, and interviewee and interviewer as co-participants in the process. I chose interviews also because I wished to achieve a depth of understanding of the educational and cultural context, rather than a broad understanding of surface patterns. I also wished interviews may help approach my research questions from a different angle (Mason 2002) and assist my interpretation of lesson episodes from classroom observations. In this study, I interviewed both teachers and pupils individually to gain understanding of the practice of focus-on-form in their English lessons.

Punch (2005) further argues that interview is a data collection tool of great flexibility, which can be adapted to suit a wide variety of research situations. The type of interview selected should therefore be aligned with the strategy, purposes and research questions. There are two major types of interviews. Rather than using unstructured interviews, I employed semi-structured interviews because I had a clear focus to investigate rather than a very general notion of wanting to do research on a topic (Bryman 2004); also my pilot study had helped me formulate some specific topics to cover in the main study. Semi-structured interview strategy was used to gain data from participant teachers, which were one-to-one interactions and face-to-face. I introduced the topic, and then guided the discussion by asking specific questions. A detailed guide was used for the individual interviews, each of which was audio-taped. In the process of the interview, I made efforts to make the interviewees did most of the talking, explaining what an idea, event, or bit of background means (Rubin and Rubin 1995).

Two interviews with teachers were carried out in their offices; the remaining four were undertaken in some restaurants, where I invited them individually for a meal

to establish a rapport. There were in total six interviews from both teachers, each of which lasted from 40-60 minutes. The first time interview was based on an interview guide (see Appendix 3 for details), which was developed from my research questions and teacher educational and teaching background. The remaining interviews were based on the observation data that I collected, aiming to explore the teachers' perception of a particular situation in depth. Interviews with individual pupils (see Appendix 9 for details) were carried out during a short playground break, each of which lasted about 10 minutes. Due to constraint of time, I only chose eight pupils from each class. Two or three pupils were selected from each level (i.e. top, average, and below average, as suggested by the teachers). I interviewed them in Chinese, since I speculated speaking in English might make them frustrated in the course of interviewing. I routinely began by getting out my tape-recorder, re-asking their permission to record and re-explaining issues of confidentiality and anonymity. I always used a tape-recorder for some pragmatic reasons: I wanted to interact with the interviewee, and I was unwilling to spend much time head-down and writing. I used two audio-recorders as a backup to account for equipment failure. Also, the tape provided me with a much more detailed record of our verbal interaction than any amount of note-taking or reflection could offer. I could replay the tapes, produce transcripts and then selectively draw on these to provide demonstrations of my arguments (Rapley, 2004). Views from interviews with the participating teachers were used to corroborate observational data.

3.4.6 Database of the study

Transcripts of observation data; field notes of lesson observation made during the process; transcripts of interviews with individual teachers, conducted on each of three occasions- near the beginning, in the middle of and near the end of the fieldwork; recordings of interviews with individual pupils about their perceptions of focus-on-form instruction in their classes constituted the database of the study. For both data sets (i.e. the two classes) audio-recordings were made during normal

class times and under normal class conditions. Table 3.1 summarizes the data sources.

A total of 34 lessons (16 and 18 respectively) were observed over 10-week period for each of the two classes. I was present during all observations as a non-participant observer, and the lessons were audio-recorded. A total of database comprised approximately 20 hours of audio-recorded classroom talk. However, within these lessons, there were some that did not focus on instruction delivery, which did not involve teacher-student interaction. As a result, 4.8 hours of data was excluded from the analysis, leaving a total of 15.2 hours (26 lessons) of communicative activities that were evenly divided between the two classes (13 lessons each class). All six (three each) interviews with two teachers and 16 interviews with individual pupils, were transcribed verbatim.

Table 3.1 Overview of Database

Data sources for analysis
Classroom observation: approximately 15 hours
C1: field notes & transcripts of 13 class observations C2: field notes & transcripts of 13 class observations
Teacher interviews: approximately 4 hours
CT1: field notes & transcripts of 3 interviews CT2: field notes & transcripts of 3 interviews
Student interviews: approximately 4 hours
C1 Pupils: field notes & transcripts of 8 interviews from 8 pupils C2 Pupils: field notes & transcripts of 8 interviews from 8 pupils

As noted in Table 3.1, the data collection resulted in: for each class, field notes of 13 class observation transcripts plus field notes and transcripts of three interviews with the teacher as well as eight interview transcripts and field notes with the pupils. The observations and interviews were audio-recorded and converted to WAV files. The data were then transcribed and translated into English for

subsequent analysis. To maintain the reliability of the transcripts, I generally transcribed the data on the day it was collected. In some cases, I did the transcription within a few days after the collection. I made every effort to transcribe gathered data as soon as practical. Occasionally, I turned to the informants and asked them to clarify anything that was unclear or confusing for me.

3.5 Methods of data analysis

In analyzing my data, I used some tactics suggested by qualitative research literature (Miles and Huberman 1994; Cohen *et al.* 2000; Holliday 2002; Bryman 2004; Punch 2005; Sapsford and Jupp 2006).

3.5.1 Transcription

The very first step of my data analysis began with transcribing data. As I noted in the previous section, I taped and later transcribed the collected data for analysis. Silverman (2005) claims:

> "Tapes and transcripts offer more than just 'something to begin with'. In the first place, they are a public record, available to the scientific community in a way that field notes are not. Second, they can be replayed and transcriptions can be improved and analyses take off on a different tack unlimited by the original transcript" (Silverman 2005:184).

Transcripts not only allowed me to review the interaction whenever I wished, but also provided me with opportunities to go back to my data to confirm it. My first approach was to transcribe verbatim the data from the interviews and classroom observations. The transcripts from observations and interviews were based on audio data and field notes. The data were anonymised in order to protect participants' identity on ethical grounds. Instead of using pseudonyms, two classroom teachers were identified as CT1 & CT2; P1, P2…P36 were identified as individual pupils (see Appendix 5 for transcription conventions). The transcripts were presented in three columns: the left-hand column was the sequence of turns, the middle column included the interaction between the teacher and the children or the speech between the interviewee and me, the right-hand column included my commentary on the action. Then I translated the transcribed data into English. To

ensure the reliability of the transcription and translation, approximately 5% of the texts were randomly chosen and transcribed by a second person, with inter-transcriber reliability of 94%; approximately 5% of the translated text was translated into Chinese by a second person to ensure the reliability of translation. Differences were discussed and amendments were made until an agreement rate of 95% was achieved. I read through my initial set of transcripts, field notes, and assigned codes to my data as soon as practical.

3.5.2 Using NVivo 2

As claimed by Bazeley and Richards (2000), most qualitative researchers use coding to identify topics, themes or issues, and bring together the data segments where these occur. A lesson from my pilot study I need to address here is to make sure of how to use NVivo before data collection and use it to organize and analyse data. It is a formidable and tedious task to organize and code data manually. In this study, NVivo (version 2) was used to organize and code data (see Appendix 8 for details). As mentioned previously, the data were recorded by digital audio-recorder and converted to WAV files and then transcribed for analysis. Transcripts were typed in MSWord and saved as rich text format (.rtf), then were imported into NVivo's document system. I used document browser to go through each document (transcript) and got familiar with it in the first place and made margin notes about significant observation as many as possible (Bryman 2004). I subsequently used document browser to code segments by highlighting relevant episodes and assigning codes to my data. I first provided free Nodes (Bazeley and Richards 2000), which were subsequently organized into 'Trees' to express relationships of topics and subtopics in the later stage.

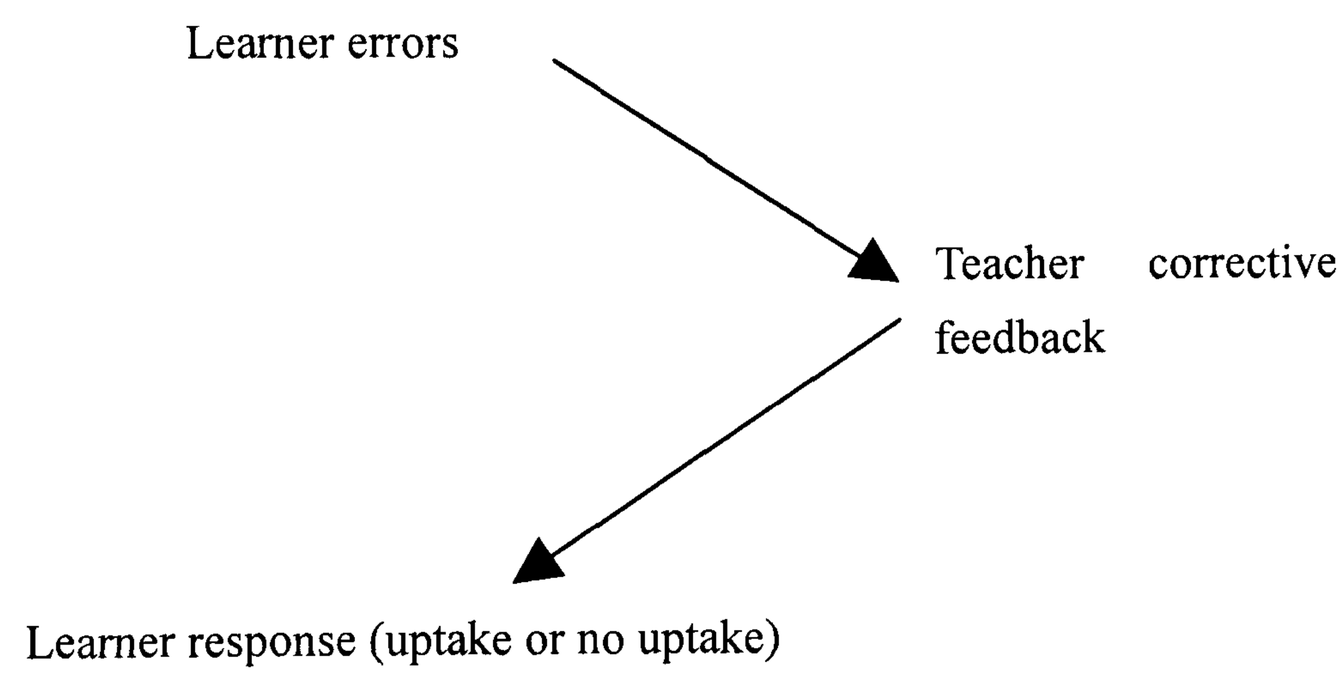
In addition, NVivo allowed me to insert memos alongside the codes. These memos enabled me to record ideas and reflections that arose in the process of coding or over the course of other analyzing. NVivo provided invaluable assistance with more than a few texts and documents to index. NVivo both facilitated and enhanced

the indexing and retrieval process, by enabling me to index a large number of categories, more efficiently than I could manually. The significant advantages of using NVivo to analyze my data are summarized as followed: 1) units of data can be assigned multiple codes, and coding segments can overlap each other; 2) segments of texts can be simultaneously sorted into several different categories; 3) programmes also count how many times each code occurred in the data files (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). I employed different techniques to code and analyze observation and interview data. I now begin with the way in which I conducted analysis of data from classroom observation.

3.5.3 The process of coding and analyzing

1) Observation data

Figure 3.1 The three-part of unit of analysis:



Regarding observation data, Nodes included the categories identified by Lyster's (Lyster and Ranta 1997; Lyster 2001) categories of error treatment and some other codes emerged from my own database (see section 4.4.3 for coding categories and examples). I used document browser to go through each document (transcript) and code segments. For example, I highlighted relevant episodes (i.e. episodes which contain at least an error) to identify what error type that involved and what corrective feedback and uptake that received. The main unit of analysis was focus-on-form episodes, each of which included a learner error, corrective feedback

and learner response (see Figure 3.1 on page 61).

a) Identifying and coding learner errors

Since the aim of the study was to examine focus-on-form in EFL lessons, the episodes containing no linguistic errors were excluded from analysis. The first step of coding consisted of identifying the learner's turns that contained at least an error. In this study, a turn starts from a person beginning to speak and ends with the point when he/she becomes a listener. Learner errors were then categorised as grammatical, phonological, lexical and other errors in terms of the error involved. Lyster (2001) provides the following definitions of learner errors:

- Grammatical errors include errors in the use of closed classes such as determiners, prepositions, and pronouns, as well as errors in tense, verb morphology, auxiliaries, and subject-verb agreement (see example 1).
- Lexical errors include inaccurate, imprecise, or inappropriate choices of lexical items in open classes-namely, nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives (see example 2).
- Phonological errors include mispronunciations (e.g. the "o" in son pronounced as /o/) and pronunciation of silent letters (e.g. the "b" in climb) (see example 3)

The category of other errors was excluded for analysis due to the low occurrence in the database.

Example 1: Grammatical errors

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
2.	*P23*[2]*: She go to work by bike**	Grammatical error

Source: [B2:2]

[Note: A indicates the data evidence is located in Class one, B stands for Class two (see Section 4.3.2 for more details)]

Example 2: Lexical errors

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
356.	*P18: … in the afternoon, he (**) he wished the clothes**	Lexical error (Wished→washed)

Source: [A5: 356]

[2] P stands for pupil. Each participant student from each class is labelled with a number ranging from 1 to 36 (please see Appendix 5: transcript conventions for details)

Example 3: Phonological errors

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
27.	*P16: Nowember*	Phonological error (November here sounds like Nowember)

Source: [A1: 27]

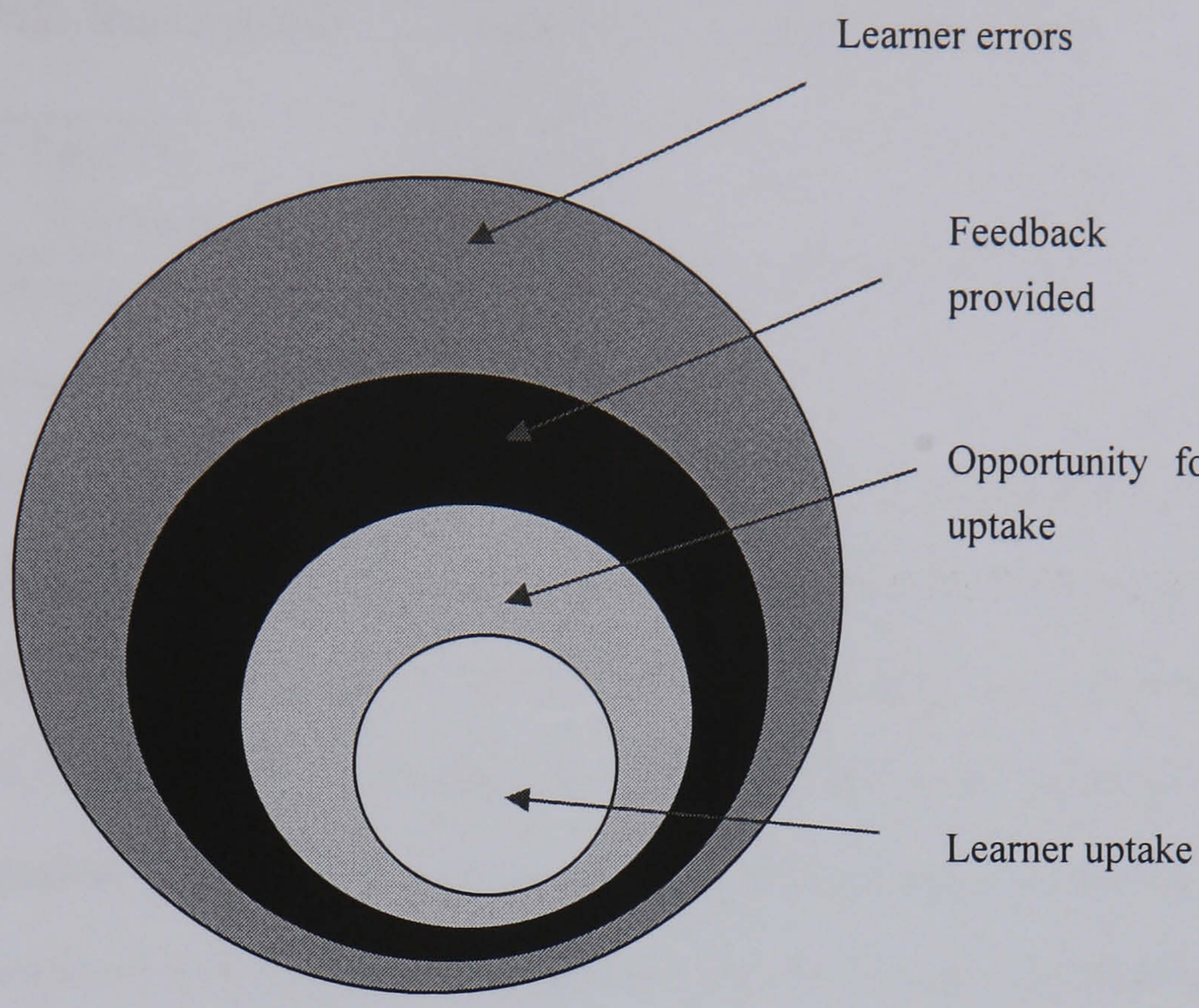
b) Identifying and coding corrective feedback

Teacher's responses to learner errors were then coded according to whether or not they provided corrective feedback. As indicated by Figure 3.2 (see page 64), some errors received corrective feedback, others were ignored. Those learner errors that received corrective feedback were further coded in accordance with Lyster and Ranta's (1997) categories.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) have distinguished six types of corrective feedback strategies, which include explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and repetition.

- Explicit correction (i.e., teacher supplies the correct form and clearly indicates what the student had said was incorrect.)
- Recasts (i.e., teacher implicitly reformulates all or part of the student's utterance.)
- Elicitation (i.e., teacher directly elicits a reformulation from students by asking questions or by pausing to allow students to complete teacher's utterance, or by asking students to reformulate their utterance.)
- Metalinguistic feedback (i.e., teacher provides comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student's utterance.)
- Clarification requests (i.e., teacher uses phrases such as *"Pardon?'* and *"I don't understand?)*
- Repetition (i.e., teacher repeats the student's utterance containing an error, adjusting intonation to highlight the error.)

Figure 3.2 Coding categories (adapted from Mackey *et al.* 2003)



A response was coded as corrective feedback if a recast was provided (see example 4), if no responses following the learner errors utterance, the utterance was then coded as 'no feedback' (see example 5). When an episode involved multiple corrective feedback strategies that attended to a learner error, only the final strategy was counted. In example 6, although two corrective feedback strategies were provided in response to learner errors, only recasts were counted.

Example 4: a corrected error

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
11.	*P17: … in Sunday**	A learner error
12.	T: On Sunday.	recasts

Source: [A9:11-12]

Example 5: an ignored error

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
16.	P13: *I took some picture.*	A learner error
17.	T: very good, next one.	no corrective feedback

Source: [B11:16-17]

Example 6: an error received two corrective feedback strategies

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
206.	P12: *Took a picture*	A learner error (sounds like talk a picture)
207.	T: Talk? (*) Took a picture.	Repetition Recasts

Source: [B5:206-207]

c) Identifying and coding opportunity to uptake

The teacher's corrective feedback was further coded according to whether or not the feedback provided learners with an opportunity to uptake. An opportunity to uptake refers to teacher's corrective feedback allows the learner to uptake. As indicated in Figure 3.2 (on page 64), learners do not always have an opportunity to use feedback (i.e. uptake), because interlocutors (referring to teachers in this study) may immediately continue their turns without giving the learner an opportunity to uptake (also see Oliver 1995). In this study, when a teacher provided a corrective feedback but then continued her turn without affording the learner an opportunity to uptake, this was classified as no opportunity to uptake (also known as 'no opportunity for modified output' Mackey *et al.* 2003). Thus, the teacher's corrective feedback turns were further coded as 'opportunity to uptake' or 'no opportunity to uptake' (see example 7 & 8).

Example 7: opportunity to uptake

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
5.	P35: … and *fish and vegetable very delicious* *	Grammatical error
6.	T: Are very delicious.	Feedback with an opportunity to uptake
7.	P35: Are very delicious…	Uptake

Source: [A9:5-7]

Example 8: no opportunity to uptake

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
11.	P25: Uh I'm 86 kilogrom*	Phonological error
12.	T: Kilogram not kilogrom, go on.	No opportunity to uptake: topic continuation marker---go on
13.	P13: He's 10cm taller than Mr. Deer…	No uptake

Source: [B12:11-12]

d) Identifying and coding learner uptake

Finally, the learner responses immediately following corrective feedback were identified. Corrective feedback can lead to either uptake (see example 7) or no uptake (example 8). No uptake refers to the occasions when a learner did not use the corrective feedback. Uptake in this context refers to learner's reformulation of an error in a single student turn and not to the whole sequence of turns that result in reformulation. Uptake is subcategorized as repair and needs-repair in terms of whether or not the learner successfully uptake the feedback (Lyster 2001; Lyster & Ranta 1997). Lyster and Ranta (1997) provide the following definitions:

- repair: uptake that results in 'repair' of the error on which the feedback focused; repair includes the student's (a) repetition[3] or (b) incorporation[4] (c) peer-repair[5] and (d) self-repair[6];
- needs-repair: uptake that results in an utterance that still needs repair; the needs-repair includes student utterances coded as acknowledgments (such as "yes" or "no" in response to teacher feedback), hesitations, same or different errors, partial repairs, or "off-target" (Lyster & Ranta 1997).

e) A summary of coding process

In summary, the study examined classroom discourse between the teacher and learners, focusing on learner errors, corrective feedback in relation to learner uptake. When an error occurred, the type of error was examined; the next turn after the error was examined to determine whether the error was responded, or whether it was ignored; if the former, the turn was examined and coded according to teacher corrective feedback category; then, teacher corrective feedback was coded

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[3] Repetitio n refers to a student's repetition of the teacher's feedback when the latter includes the correct form.

[4] Incor poration refers to a student's repetition of the correct form provided by the teacher, which is then incorporated into a longer utterance produced by the student.

[5] Peer-repair refers to peer-correction provided by a student, other than the one who made the initial error, in response to the teacher's feedback.

[6] Self -repair refers to a self-correction, produced by the student who made the initial error, in response to the teacher's feedback when the latter does not already provide the correct form.

according to whether or not it provided any opportunity to uptake; finally, the turn after teacher feedback was identified and coded according to whether or not the learner made use of the feedback (i.e. uptake); learner uptake includes either (a) utterances still in need of repair (needs-repair) or (b) utterances with repair (repair). One point I need to reiterate here, learner uptake in this study refers to the response of corrective feedback in a single student turn. The coding process consisted of first identifying which of the learner's utterances containing errors. Teacher responses to learner errors were then coded according to whether or not they provided corrective feedback. Next, the feedback was coded according to whether there was an opportunity to uptake. Finally, learner responses to corrective feedback with opportunity to uptake were coded based on whether or not such reformulation was correct.

f) Statistics analysis of observation data

The preceding paragraphs have described the process of coding, this section explains how to analyse the observation data. As indicated by research questions, one aim of the study was to carry out a direct comparison between the two classes, in which two classes were compared and contrasted in terms of variables (see Table 3.2 (on page 68) for a list of variables).

The coded sequences in NVivo were further coded in accordance with the coding instruction in Table 3.2. A data file (see Appendix 6) was created to record the outcome and the results were imported into programme SPSS 15 for subsequent analyses. It should be noted here, all numbers involved in the file were at the nominal level of measurement. All inferential statistics were performed using SPSS 15.0. Descriptive statistics were calculated for error types, the provision of corrective feedback and learner uptake. On the correlation between the two classes regarding error types, corrective feedback and learner uptake was submitted to the Chi-square analysis. Chi-square was used to show whether there were statistically significant differences between the two classes in terms of learner errors, corrective

feedback and learner uptake.

Table 3.2: A list of variables in the data file

FULL VARIABLE NAME	SPSS VARIABLE NAME	CODING INSTRUCTIONS
Class	Class	1=class one 2=class two
Error type	errortp	1=grammatical errors; 2= phonological errors; 3=lexical errors 4= other errors
Feedback or no feedback	fdbk	1=yes, 2=no
Feedback type	fdbktp	1=recasts; 2=repetition, 3=explicit correction; 4=use of L1; 5=elicitation; 6=clarification; 7=invitation to other learners; 8=repetition requests
Opportunity to use feedback	oppor	1=yes, 2=no
Learner responses	respon	1=repair; 2= needs-repair; 3= no uptake

2) Interview Data

With regard to the interview data, the inductive coding of data was employed to search the texts for common thematic elements (Bryman 2004). Before being assigned codes, interview transcripts that were saved as rich text format (.rtf) were imported into NVivo's document system. I firstly read through the data closely to identify some key points or themes that may be significant. I then came up with a set of categories with those themes. I finally used document browser to assign codes to my data. Again, I first provided free Nodes and organized them into 'Trees' to express relationships of topics and subtopics. I read through my data and those codes iteratively for continually revising. I reviewed my codes again and considered more general theoretical ideas in relation to codes and data (Bryman 2004). Besides, I used several tactics which were termed by Miles & Huberman

(1994) to code and analyze data.

a) Noting patterns, themes

After a close reading of my data, I searched through my interview data for regularities and patterns as well as for topics that my data covered, and then I developed a list of coding categories, which represented these topics and patterns (Bogdan and Biklen 2003). Patterns or themes that pull together a lot of material into more meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis often emerge (Miles & Huberman 1994). The human mind finds patterns very quickly, so patterns need to be subjected to skepticism, which needs to be empirically confirmed (Miles and Huberman 1994).

b) Seeing plausibility

Miles & Huberman (1994) claim that plausibility which was drawing the analyst's attention to a conclusion that looked reasonable and made good sense, was an initial impression that needed further checking through other tactics.

c) Clustering

Clustering is a tactic that can be applied at many levels of events or acts of individual actors, or processes. In all instances, researchers understand a phenomenon better by grouping and then conceptualizing objects that have similar patterns or characteristics.

d) Making contrasts/comparisons

Two case studies allowed me to explore what was similar and what was different between two classrooms, which were in the same primary school with similar settings.

In addition to the above mentioned tactics that I employed, I also utilized the following practices. As my research proceeded, I kept a research diary, in which I

recorded my own thoughts and feelings during the whole process of the study. During data collection stage, I wrote a diary that included a brief descriptive summary of what had happened and a brief reflection on it. After each class observation or interview, I wrote a summary of what I thought while I read over my data. I developed links in the summary between my diary and field notes. I continued this practice of memo writing or summarizing regularly. These memos can provide a time to reflect on issues raised in the setting and how they relate to larger theoretical, methodological, and substantive issues (Bogdan and Biklen 1992). Besides, I discussed the ongoing research and the developing indexing system with colleagues.

3.6 Ethical issues arising in the conduct of the research

Attention should be paid to a series of ethical issues that arose before, during and after qualitative studies (Miles and Huberman 1994). This research was conducted in accordance with principles and guidelines set out by Research Ethics Framework (Economic and Social Research Council[7]). Permission was gained from the stakeholders for access to the school and the participants. A consent form was distributed to each of them, asking for their consent before carrying out this research. Written consent to conduct audio recording of lessons was requested from teachers, parents and pupils (see Appendix 4). The consent informed that they were being researched; it explained data collection methods; it also ensured that they participated voluntarily; they had the right to withdraw at any time. Participants were also informed that the data would be used for research purposes only, rather than for other purposes. The consent ensured the confidentiality of data source and the anonymity of participants. The consent permitted the findings from the research to be reported in publications with a prerequisite that data were confidentially protected. In order to make sure that participants fully understand the information in the consent form, it was written in Mandarin Chinese (see also Appendix 4 for

[7] http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/ESRC_Re_Ethics_Frame_tcm6-11291.pdf

consent forms).

Generally speaking, I attempted to bear the above mentioned ethical issues in mind throughout my conduct of the research. For example, I made it clear at the very beginning what I was going to do, and what participants were supposed to do in the study. I took every reasonable measure to protect my participants from harm. Overall, relatively few ethical issues occurred throughout the whole process; nevertheless, there were a couple of ethical dilemmas. As I mentioned before, a second person was requested to transcribe, code and translate a certain amount of data, which constituted the first issue. Consent forms did say I would ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. The identities that involved were protected prior to being coded or translated by the inter-transcriber/coder. I, however, recognized the difficulty in protecting anonymity, when I was about to handover the selected texts to the transcriber. I had to ask them again if they would allow the inter-transcriber to transcribe the classroom and interview discourse that was randomly selected. Fortunately, all granted their consent. If I were to do it again, I would likely state in the consent form that certain amount of data would be transcribed by a second transcriber.

3.7 The quality of the data and data analyses

> "Methodological awareness involves a commitment to showing as much as possible to the audience of research studies... the procedures and evidence that have led to particular conclusions, always open to the possibility that conclusions may need to be revised in the light of new evidence" (Seale 1999:x).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four constructs for evaluating the quality of qualitative studies: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which match terms of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity in quantitative research (also see, Marshall and Rossman 1999). A number of measures can be taken to ensure the quality of a qualitative study.

To ensure credibility, the study has used a thick description that was framed by Denzin (1994) throughout the research. It has described the research setting, sample, and theoretical framework in sufficient detail to show the complexities of process and interactions (Marshall and Rossman 1999). It has also provided a detailed description of data collection and analysis throughout the whole process. Another advantage of the study is that it has used data triangulation and methodological triangulation to enhance transferability. Multi data-gathering methods have been used to collect data from multi sources to enhance generalization. Mason (2002) claims that generalization is not easy to achieve in qualitative research, because it requires thinking carefully, and acting strategically throughout the whole research process. The issue whether or not qualitative studies can be generalized is controversial; nevertheless, Stake (1995) claims that generalisability can be enhanced by multi case studies. To strength the generalizability, or the usefulness for other settings, the study has designed to involve multi-cases to compare and contrast all the data fragments that arose in the two cases (see Section 3.4 & 3.5). Silverman (2005) also suggests qualitative researchers should always attempt to find another case through which to test out a provisional hypothesis to achieve valid findings.

In order to achieve the dependability, I made the research process transparent through describing my research design and conduct (see section 3.4) and data analysis methods (see section 3.5) in a great detailed manner. In terms of categories generation, I used the following procedures to achieve the dependability of categories. I firstly began analysis on a relatively small part of my data. When I had generated a set of categories, I then tested out emerging hypotheses by steadily expanding my data corpus. I kept on testing until my generalization was able to apply to all relevant data that I have collected. A provisional analytic scheme was generated. The analytic scheme was considered as provisional until a set of rules that were applied to all the data in the analysis were derived. I examined them in greater detail to see if they needed to be modified.

As suggested by Silverman's (2005), field note conventions and inter-coder agreement were two ways of strengthening the quality of field data. In the study, the second inter-transcriber (was also the second inter-coder) offered to transcribe and code about 5% of the whole database. She was also the second translator who did back translation of 5% of the text. In addition, I transcribed data as soon as practical and turned to participants for certain clarification when appropriate. I made field notes each time when I conducted classroom observation or interviews. Short notes that were made during field session were expanded as soon as practical after each field work session. I also kept a research journal to record any idea and problem arising throughout the research (Spradley 1979). Silverman (2006) claims using standardized methods to write field notes and prepare transcripts can enhance the quality of a study. I therefore employed a pre-designed observation sheet (see Appendix 1) while conducting classroom observation.

I used quantitative measures to calculate some data to achieve the confirmability of the study. SPSS was used to offer correlations among variables, through such an attempt to avoid spurious correlations (Silverman 2005). As suggested by Silverman (2005), tabulation can improve the quality of data analysis. In my analysis of the practice of focus-on-form, I constructed a number of tables, showing the different and similar focus-on-form instructions in EFL lessons between the two classes.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has set up the research design, provided a rationale for the development of two case studies. It has described the conduct of data collection and analysis tactics employed during and after data collection. It then has tried to describe ethical issues arose so far. Finally, the research quality has been addressed.

Chapter 4: A Comparison of the two Classes' Focus-on-form Instructions

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter has considered an overview of the research design and outlined the research methodology of this study. This chapter presents and discusses the findings from classroom observation data as well as interview data with participants. It aims to find out to what extent are focus-on-form instructions (i.e., learner errors, corrective feedback and learner uptake) different between the two classes. This chapter starts with a brief summary of the results from the analysis of classroom observation data; regarding learner errors, corrective feedback and learner uptake, it examines the similarities and differences in focus-on-form instructions between the two classes; it concludes with a summary.

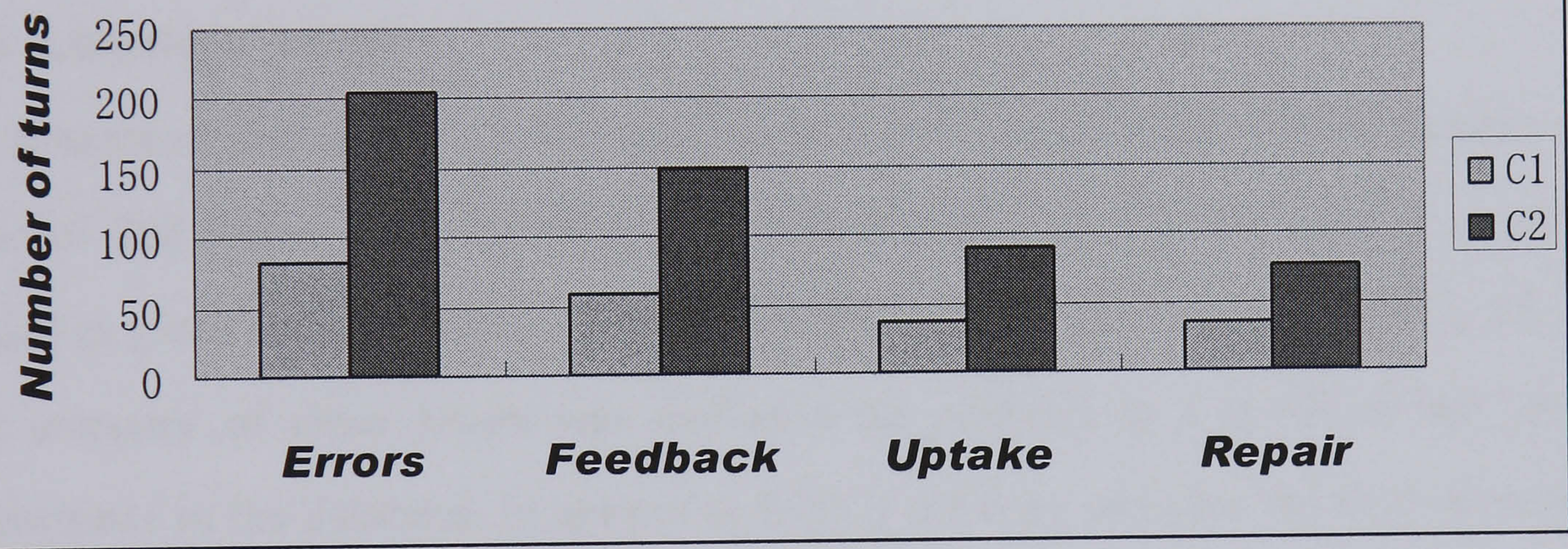
4.2 Results of classroom data

The analysis of classroom observation data from 26 lessons (13 lessons from each class) yielded a total of 2,690 student turns and 2,112 teacher turns respectively. The database was composed of a total of 288 of all students turns contained at least one error (n=270) or were still in need of repair (n=18). Of these, 210 immediately received some kinds of corrective feedback from the teachers, with the remaining errors (n=78) being ignored. Of all teacher feedback in response to learner errors, 129 resulted in learner uptake[1]; 111 of which were repaired within the error treatment sequence. The totals for the database from each classroom are illustrated by Figure 4.1: the number of pupil turns containing errors, the number of teacher turns with corrective feedback, the number of pupil turns with uptake and the number of pupil turns with repair. Figure 4.1 illustrates significant differences between C1 and C2 in terms of learner errors, corrective feedback, uptake and repair. A total of 83 errors occurred in C1, compared to 205 errors in C2; that is to

[1] Learner uptake can be successful or unsuccessful, with the former referring to repair. Repair results in learner's error that is repaired after a teacher's prompt (see also 3.5.3 for details).

say, C2 learners committed two and half times as many as did C1 learners within certain amount of class time (i.e. 13 lessons). In response to those learner errors, the two participant teachers provided 60 (73% of total) and 150 (73% of total) turns with corrective feedback respectively. Corrective feedback from CT1 resulted in 38 student turns with uptake (63% of corrective feedback achieved learner uptake), among which 35 turns with corrective feedback (58% of total corrective feedback) were repaired (i.e. successful uptake). In the case of C2, 91 (61%) of total corrective feedback led to learner uptake, 76 of which eventually resulting in learner repair (51%).

Figure 4.1 Frequency of turns with errors, feedback, uptake and repair



It is apparent that turns with errors, feedback, uptake and repair occurred more frequently in C2 than in C1; nevertheless, it is inappropriate to infer that CT2 was more likely to provide corrective feedback than CT1, or feedback from CT2 led to more learner uptake or repair. In the following section, I shall present some major findings from the study to explore the similarities and differences in focus-on-form instructions between the two classes. As indicated in section 3.5.3, the unit analysis of the study is focus-on-form episode that consists of a three-part exchange, including a learner initial utterance containing at least an error (i.e. learner errors), the teacher's response (i.e. corrective feedback) to the learner error, and learner reaction to teacher's response (uptake or no uptake). The learners' responses to corrective feedback are optional. The results presentation starts with the first part of focus-on-form episodes: learner errors.

The following sections aim to seek answers to RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3. RQ1 aims to find out to what extent are the total number of errors and the distribution of each error type different between C1 and C2. RQ2 aims to find out to what extent is the provision of corrective feedback different between C1 and C2. RQ3 attempts to find out to what extent are learners' responses to teachers' corrective feedback different between C1 and C2. As indicated in section 3.5.3, the raw frequency data was subjected to Pearson's Chi-square (X^2) test with the SPSS 15.0. The percentage in each comparison is also reported. It should be noted here that the analysis of data did not include unprompted self-correction; instead, it analysed only prompted repair-what was defined as 'responding focus-on-form episodes' that was identified in the study reported by Ellis *et al.* (2001a).

4.3 Learners' errors

As illustrated above, overall, the analysis of classroom observation data yielded a total of 288 errors, each initiated by a student turn containing at least one error coded as grammatical, phonological and lexical errors. As indicated in section 3.5.3, the category of other errors was excluded for analysis as a result of the low occurrence in the database. In answer to RQ1, I not only compare the total number of learner errors, but also the distribution of each error type between C1 and C2.

4.3.1 The total number and distribution of errors

Table 4.1 below illustrates a significant difference in the total number of errors that occurred: a total of 83 errors were generated by C1 pupils, compared to 205 by pupils from C2. The significance in the total amount of errors between C1 and C2 put forward another question: does the difference also exist between the two classes according to the distribution of each error type that is involved? Descriptive statistics were thus employed to compare learner errors in the two separate databases.

Looking at Table 4.1, we will see there were grammatical errors in total of 205 that

accounted for more than 71.2% of errors in the entire database. Phonological errors with the frequency of 64 (22.2%) were the next prominent indicator of learner errors. The remaining 19 errors that were in the form of lexis comprised the least frequency in the data, accounting for less than 7%. In addition, the table indicates the total number and percentage of each error type represented in the respective database.

Table 4.1 Frequency and distribution of errors

			error types			
			grammatical errors	phonological errors	lexical errors	Total
class	class one	Count	63	16	4	83
		% within class	75.9%	19.3%	4.8%	100.0%
	class two	Count	142	48	15	205
		% within class	69.3%	23.4%	7.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	205	64	19	288
		% within class	71.2%	22.2%	6.6%	100.0%

According to Table 4.1, in the case of C1, grammatical, phonological, and lexical errors occurred with the frequency of 63, 16, and 4 respectively, with grammatical errors being the highest frequency, lexical errors being the lowest. To convert this to percentage, grammatical errors represented around 75.9% of total errors within class, phonological errors accounted for 19.3%, with the remaining 4.8% being lexical errors. Correspondingly, it also shows the distribution of the errors in C2. Similar to C1, grammatical errors in C2 occurred with the highest frequency, phonological errors came next, and lexical errors occurred with the least frequency. From the perspective of what percentage each category represents, grammatical errors accounted for 69.3% of the total errors; phonological errors represented 23.4% of total errors; while 7.3% of the total errors were in the form of lexicon. Taking into account each error type represented, there was remarkable similarity in general proportion of error types between C1 and C2, even though C2 learners produced much more errors than C1 learners.

In summary, while pupils from C1 and C2 shared error types - grammatical, lexical

and phonological errors and the order of prominence/frequency in common, there was a significant difference in the total number of errors that pupils committed. Pupils from C2 produced more errors than C1 pupils regardless of error types; nevertheless, the general distribution of the three categories in C1 and C2 was similar. Among all error types, grammatical errors occurred with the highest frequency, accounting for more than 70% of total errors in the respective classroom database. Lexical errors occurred with the lowest frequency in the two classes. This section has examined learner errors and made a direct comparison of learner errors between C1 and C2, the next section discusses possible reasons for the above findings.

4.3.2 The interpretation of the findings

Each data source illustrating in the current study is presented together with a reference to the source [Class Teacher Interview Transcript/Classroom Recording Transcript Number: Line Number] indicating where the data evidence is located. As for observation data transcripts, I shall use A to indicate that the transcript is located in C1; I shall use B to show the transcript comes from C2's database. For example, the reference [B2:11-13] indicates that the data evidence is located in C2's second classroom transcript from line 11th to 13th. In terms of interview data transcripts, I shall use TA to refer to CT1, with TB referring to CT2. For example, [TA1:1] indicates that the data source is located in the first line of the first interview transcript from CT1.

1) Teaching methods

Classroom observation data as well as field notes indicate that both teachers followed a generally similar teaching procedure. They started with their lessons with a story-time session of around three minutes. They continued to carry out warm-up activities or question-and-answer session, with the focus on encouraging learners to communicate in classes. Later they went for new words and phrases introduction, before introducing dialogues or conversations in the textbook if the

pedagogical focus was on new lesson delivery, or they played the tape recorder and required the pupils to do listening activities in class. They often brought in pictures to serve as a stimulus to communication, in which the students identified objects or actions depicted in graphics.

In spite of the above routine procedures that both teachers shared, they also had their distinctive way of lesson delivery in their respective classrooms. CT1 spent a good deal of class time with the whole class attention, playing games to practise words, phrases, and dialogues, calling on individual pupils by name and encouraging them to communicate. She seldom assigned pair-work (i.e. twice) to her pupils while I was observing, probably because CT1 did not believe pair-work would make children learn better. The interview data indicated that she was afraid of somehow losing control if pupils were given more floor in their learning (TA2:32).

By contrast, CT2 usually delivered lessons by asking pupils questions. As shown from observation data and field notes, CT2 spent more time on question-answer session (i.e. approximately one third of class time was devoted to question-answer session) than CT1, who also spared time on question-answer session, but she did not spend as much time on this as CT2. CT2 also set up activities for the pupils to work on, usually in pairs and later performed activities before the whole class. She carried out pair-work activities almost every lesson so as to provide pupils with opportunities to use English. She moved around to observe and provide scaffolding during pair-work activities. CT2 did have the whole class's attention on practising words and phrases, but did not spend as much time in this situation as CT1 did.

In summary, although the two participant teachers shared certain teaching procedures, CT1 spent more time with the whole class attention; while CT2 spent more time on pair-work and question-answer sessions. Different teaching methods may account for the result that varied number of learner errors occurred between

the two classes.

2) Grammar is not the teaching focus

In addition, the analysis of data indicates that grammatical errors occurred with the highest frequency in both classes. When both teachers were asked to explain the high occurrence of grammatical errors during interview, CT1 revealed,

> Grammar, especially, third person singular-s, tense and subject-verb agreement is hard for them. They make lots of errors on these aspects…. (TA3:4)
> …I don't teach students systematic written grammar on account of syllabus requirement (TA1:72).

While CT2 had more to say,

> I think it mainly because we do not teach grammar explicitly. I do explain grammar from time to time, but in most cases, it's not my teaching focus. In addition, English grammar is completely different from that in Chinese. …English requires inflections, such as past tense marker-ed, but Chinese doesn't, which is a challenge for kids to bear all these rules in mind when speaking English in front of the whole class… (TB1: 74).

During the interviews, both teachers revealed that they did not teach grammar systematically in their English classes, meanwhile they pointed out that it was a real challenge for Chinese pupils to grasp English grammar. CT1 described that she did not teach students systematic written grammar with regard to syllabus requirement. Similarly, CT2 also provided a reason for the high frequency of grammatical errors by indicating that grammar was not her teaching focus. The insufficient exposure to English grammar as well as the discrepancy between English and their L1 grammar might account for the high frequency of grammatical errors in the database (see Chapter 6 for a further discussion).

4.4 Teachers' corrective feedback

The previous section has provided answers to RQ1; this section explores the way in which both teachers attended to learner errors in EFL classes. As indicated above, of these 288 errors (including turns coded as needs-repair), 210 (73%) errors were followed by teacher's corrective feedback, which were coded as 'feedback'. The remaining 78 learner errors were immediately followed by topic continuation instead of corrective feedback, which were coded as 'no feedback'. The turns with

feedback were coded as recasts, explicit correction, repetition, elicitation, clarification requests, use of L1, invitation to other learners or repetition requests (see Section 4.4.3 for definitions and examples). Furthermore, the turn with feedback was coded as 'opportunity for using feedback' when it allowed learner uptake to take place; on the other hand, it was coded as 'no opportunity for using feedback' when a teacher continued her/his turn without giving a learner an opportunity to respond to the feedback.

This section attempts to seek answers to RQ2 (i.e. To what extent is the provision of corrective feedback to learner errors different between the two classes?) that examines corrective feedback in terms of the total number, the tendency (i.e., what kind of errors teachers tend to ignore, what sort of errors they are likely to correct), the preference (i.e. what kind of feedback type they prefer to use) and the opportunities to uptake.

4.4.1 The total number of corrective feedback

This section aims to answer RQ2's sub-question 1) To what extent is the total number of corrective feedback different? Evidence from the study indicates when a learner produced an error in communicative lessons both teachers were often willing to attend to it. Table 4.2 was set up to make a comparison of the total number of corrective feedback between the two classes. It is apparent that CT2 provided more feedback (n=150) than CT1 (n=60) to attend to learner errors; however, if we take account of what percentage of errors receiving attention from the teacher, we will find that both teachers attended to a similar percentage of learner errors in EFL lessons. Looking at Table 4.2, both teachers attended to approximately 73% of learner errors in their respective lessons.

During the interviews, when asked about the attention to learner errors in actual EFL lessons, CT1 said she attended to most of learner errors because she worried that the pupils would think they were right and kept on saying wrong English in the

same way, if she did not attend to the error. In the interview, she supplemented:

> I have low tolerance of errors; I'll at least draw learners' attention to their errors as long as I realize any error occurs… (TA3:24).
>
> …I've corrected most of errors… (TA1:82)

Likewise, in the interview, CT2 revealed a similar attitude saying

> I'll provide feedback upon their errors. As long as I hear it, I'll at least draw their attention to it. … I try my best to correct as many as errors as I can in class. Of course, I may miss out some errors, I do let some errors go from time to time when I believe the error results from pupils' carelessness or nerve rather than their incapacity of producing a corrective answer or I don't hear or I have close control of time (TB1:78).

CT2 also expressed her willingness to regularly correct learners' errors; however, she also stated that she sometimes ignored the error when her knowledge informed her that the error resulted from such factor as the nerve of speaking English in front of the whole class rather than their incapacity of producing a corrective form.

Table 4.2 Provision of feedback

			class		
			class one	class two	Total
feedback	feedback	Count	60	150	210
		% within class	72.3%	73.2%	72.9%
	no feedback	Count	23	55	78
		% within class	27.7%	26.8%	27.1%
Total		Count	83	205	288
		% within class	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

a. Computed only for a 2x2 table

b. $X^2 = .995$, df= 1, p= .884

Chi-square analysis with the corrected value ($X^2 = .995$, df= 1, p= .884) indicates that there were no statistically significant differences in the provision of feedback (i.e., feedback or no feedback) between C1 and C2. As discussed above, the analysis yielded two major findings: a) more turns containing corrective feedback were identified in C2 than that in C1; b) however, a similar percentage of errors from each class received attention from the teachers.

The above two findings indicate both teachers attended to a similar percentage of learner errors, even though the total number of corrective feedback provided by them differed. The higher occurrence of corrective feedback in C2 can partly result

from the larger number of learner errors in C2 than C1 (see Table 4.1 for the total number of errors). Both teachers' perceptions relating to corrective feedback may somehow account for the finding that they attended to a similar percentage of learner errors in EFL lessons. When asked about her perception of attention to form in EFL lessons, CT1 stated her view on error treatment in lessons:

> …I see error treatment as a key to English teaching and learning. I am giving them feedback on their errors, so that they can know when they go wrong. They can know when they need to make some improvement (TA1:84).

CT2 revealed that she tried her best to correct as many as errors as she could, because she believed:

> …corrective feedback is important for language teaching and learning… (TB1:80).

During the interview, both teachers clearly claimed that error correction played a role in English learning and teaching. CT1 stated that corrective feedback could help learners realize their errors, which may as a result contribute to their subsequent improvements. CT2 stated that she generally corrected as many errors as possible because she believed error correction played a facilitative role in learning English. The similar response rate from the two participant teachers may lie in their positive view of corrective feedback. Both teachers assumed that error corrections were important for language teaching and learning and they were willing to attend to errors in EFL lessons.

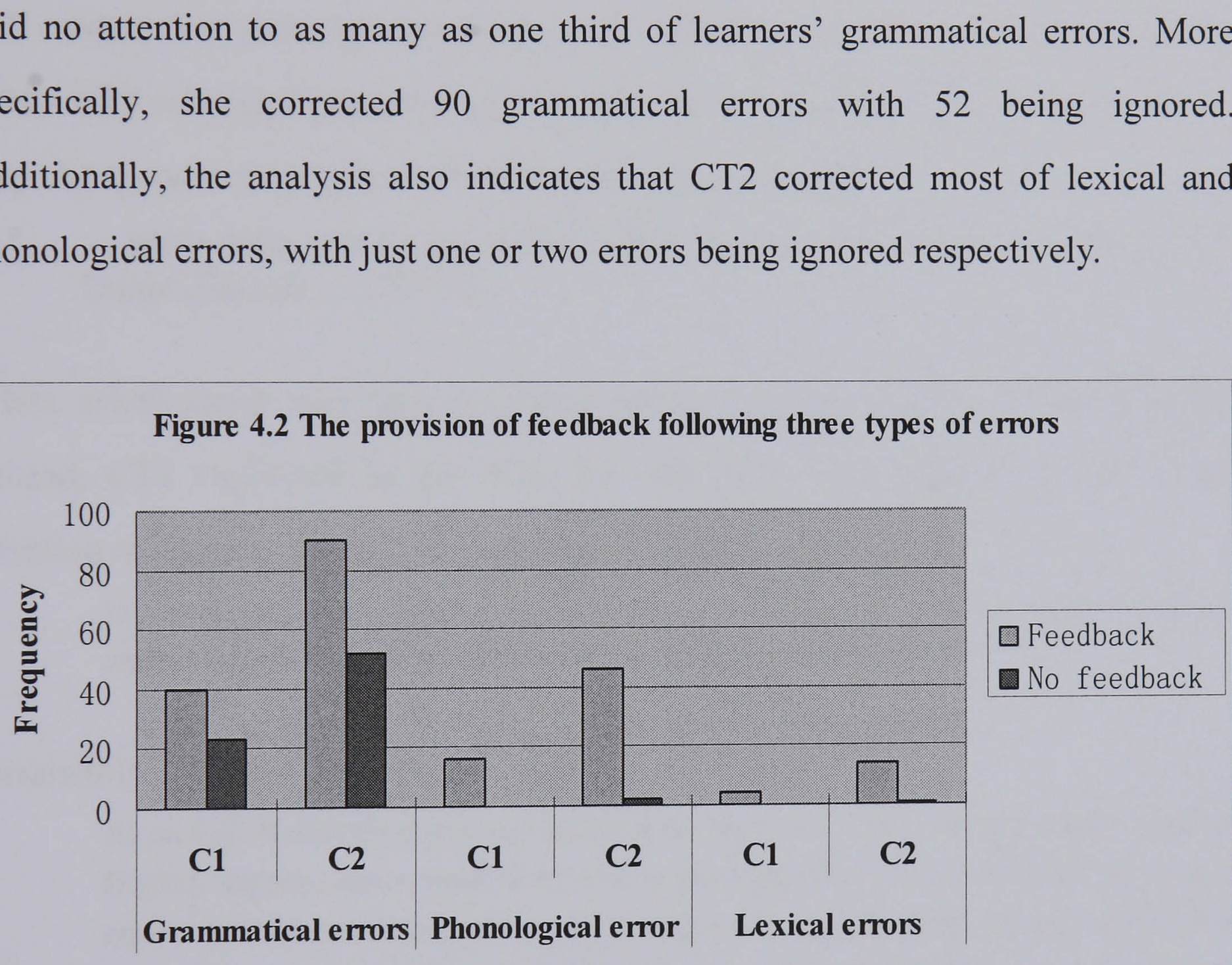
In summary, there was a difference in the total number of corrective feedback between C1 and C2; despite this, both teachers responded to a similar percentage of errors with corrective feedback in their lessons. Teacher's perception of attention to form may play a part in focus-on-form instructions.

4.4.2 The general tendency in corrective feedback

This section aims to answer RQ2's sub-question 2) To what extent is teachers' tendency different? (i.e., what kinds of errors they tend to ignore; what sort of

errors they appear to correct?) Looking at Figure 4.2 (below), in the case of C1, we can see that there were 40 grammatical errors that were immediately followed by CT1's corrective feedback, with the remaining 23 being ignored. This finding indicates that CT1 ignored more than one third of her pupils' grammatical errors. In terms of phonological errors, a total of 16 were overwhelmingly followed by corrective feedback. Likewise, no instances of lexical errors were ignored in C1. Interestingly, as indicated in Figure 4.2, CT2 showed similar general tendencies in providing corrective feedback as CT1 with varied frequency. Similarly, CT2 also paid no attention to as many as one third of learners' grammatical errors. More specifically, she corrected 90 grammatical errors with 52 being ignored. Additionally, the analysis also indicates that CT2 corrected most of lexical and phonological errors, with just one or two errors being ignored respectively.

Figure 4.2 The provision of feedback following three types of errors



Despite the differences in the total number of corrective feedback between C1 and C2, the analysis indicates that both teachers seemed to have a similar tendency in providing corrective feedback. They seemed to have a higher tolerance of grammatical errors committed, with approximately one third of grammatical errors being ignored. On the contrary, they corrected most of the phonological and lexical errors that learners made, with only a couple of phonological and lexical errors being ignored. However, it should be more cautious to interpret this finding, as

grammatical errors were the single most frequent type of errors occurring in both classes, accounting for more than two times as frequently as the total of lexical and phonological errors.

In comparison with findings in other studies (e.g., Lyster's 1998b), the rate at which each error type received corrective feedback in this study is higher. This may be attributed to the participant teacher's perception of attention to form in EFL classes. When asked about why she ignored some grammatical errors in lessons, CT1 stated that some grammatical errors failed to have her attention (TA3:8). While CT2 reiterated grammar was not the focus and supplied with another reason why she ignored some grammatical errors in the interview:

> … pupils make so many grammatical errors that I have to ignore some of them due to limited class time… (TB3:10).

When asked about why they corrected most of phonological and lexical errors instead, CT1 explained in the interview that they were required to pay much attention on learner' pronunciation (TA3:16). She further stated:

> In comparison to grammatical and phonological errors, lexical errors are fewer, which makes possible to deal with within limited class time… (TA3:24).

Meanwhile, CT2 had more to say:

> As an English teacher at primary school level, my primary job is to train pupils' sense of English language and to teach them how to speak Standard English. I think it essential to correct their pronunciation timely, as the longer they keep speaking nonstandard English, the harder to correct. I think it beneficial to speak correct English from the very beginning. I think as an English teacher I shall correct pupils' phonological errors whenever they occur (TB3:14).

When asked about how she dealt with lexical errors, CT2 revealed:

> They don't make as many lexical errors as they do in grammar. Some pupils may commit the same grammatical error repeatedly, such as third-person singular. However quite few pupils would make the same lexical error repeatedly (TB3:22).

Based on interview data, one possible reason for the finding that one third of grammatical errors were ignored may exist in the fact that grammatical errors

occurred with such a high frequency that teachers were unable to attend to all of them within limited class time. Not being the teaching focus may constitute another reason for not attending to grammatical errors. On the other hand, teachers attended to most errors in the form of lexicon and phonology possibly due to fewer instances in the database. In addition, as claimed by CT2, pronunciation was the teaching focus may partly account for the finding that both teachers attended to most of phonological errors.

4.4.3 Preferred feedback types

This section aims to seek answers to the third sub-question of RQ2 (i.e., To what extent is teachers' preference for corrective feedback types different?). Evidence indicates that both teachers extensively employed corrective feedback to attend to learner errors in EFL lessons. The evidence shows that 210 out of a total of 288 errors were responded with corrective feedback. The examples from the transcribed data illustrate clearly that the two teachers attended to learner errors in their classrooms with various corrective feedback strategies. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Lyster and Ranta (1997) have identified six different types of feedback that French immersion teachers employed when attending to learner errors in French immersion classes. In this study, participant teachers' responses to learner errors were coded in accordance with Lyster and Ranta's (1997) categories. The analysis of observation data has identified five corrective feedback types (i.e. explicit correction, recasts, elicitation, clarification requests and repetition) other than metalinguistic feedback that were defined by Lyster and Ranta (1997). Meanwhile, the analysis yielded some other strategies that did not fit Lyster and Ranta's categories, including invitation to other learners; repetition requests; use of L1. In attempt to demonstrate the coding system that is used, eight (i.e. one example from each feedback category) illustrative extracts from classroom observation data are provided below.

1) Recasts: teacher implicitly reformulates all or part of the learner's utterance;

   e.g.,

LINE	TRANSCRIPT	ANNOTATION
348.	P1: … *On the afternoon**	A learner error
349.	T: In the afternoon.	Recasts
350.	P1: In the afternoon, xx played football with his friends.	Uptake (repair)

Source: [B5:348-350]

2) Repetition: teacher repeats an error, adjusting intonation to highlight it; e.g.,

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
205.	P6: *I was very grateful to the him*	A learner error
206.	T: To the HIM?	Repetition
207.	P6: The dog.	Uptake (repair)

Source: [B6:205-207]

3) Elicitation: teacher directly elicits a reformulation from students by asking questions or by pausing to allow students to complete teacher's utterance, or by asking students to reformulate their utterance; e.g.,

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
25.	P24: … *I go to school at by car*	A learner error
26.	T: Say it again.	Elicitation
27.	I go to school at 07:30. I by car.	Uptake (needs-repair)

Source: [A7: 25-28]

4) Explicit correction: teacher supplies the correct form and clearly indicates that what the student had said was incorrect; e.g.,

LINE	TRANSCRIPTION	ANNOTATION
354.	P18: *On the Sunday, Wuyifan**	A learner error
355.	T: Not on the Sunday, on Sunday	Explicit correction
356.	P18: On Sunday, wuyifan played football with his friends.	Uptake (repair)

Source: [A5: 354-356]

5) Clarification requests: teacher uses phrases such as 'pardon'? e.g.

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
136.	P5: *You go camping last weekend.*	A learner error
137.	T: Pardon?	Clarification requests
138.	P5: Go camping?	Uptake (needs-repair)

Source: [B4: 136-138]

6) Invitation to other learners: teacher invites another pupil to correct the nominated pupil's error, such as *"who will try?*

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
35.	P24: … *I read a books at* *	A learner error
36.	T: Stop, who will try?	Invitation to other learners
37.	P10: I read books…	Uptake (repair)

Source: [B7:35-37]

7) Repetition requests: teacher ask pupils to read after her when an error (generally a phonological error) occur, such as *"read after me"*

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
137.	Ps: Tongue twisters*	A learner error (students did not pronounce correctly)
138.	T: Tongue twisters. Read after me. Tongue twisters…	Repetition requests
139.	Ps: Tongue twisters…	Uptake (repair)

Source: [B6:137-139]

8) Use of L1: teacher use pupils' L1 (Chinese) to explain the error

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
35.	P32: … *I eat breakfast at 6:30 o'clock* *	A learner error
36.	T: 注意，这里不能用 O'CLOCK. 大家记住，我们可以说 6 o'clock, 或者 7 o'clock, 但是我们不可以说 half past six o'clock，明白吗?	Use of L1
37.	P32: I go to school at 7 o'clock. I eat lunch at half past eleven…	Uptake (repair)

Source: [A6:35-37]

Participant teacher's turns with corrective feedback in response to learner errors were coded in accordance with the above coding categories. The distribution of different feedback types are displayed for each teacher in Table 4.3. As shown in Table 4.3, both teachers utilized a variety of corrective feedback strategies to attend to learner's errors in their EFL lessons. The table reveals that while the two class teachers differed in the total number of corrective feedback, they shared corrective feedback types in common—recasts, elicitation, repetition, explicit correction, clarification, use of L1, repetition requests and invitation to other learners. The table also demonstrates their similar predominance of using these strategies to attend to learner errors in lessons. One similarity is both teachers were more likely

to use recasts that were the single most frequent type, more than four times as frequent as the next category, repetition. In addition to recasts, both teachers tended to use repetition to draw learners' attention to errors. Another similarity is feedback with clarification requests and repetition requests occurred with the lowest frequency in each class.

Table 4.3 Distribution of feedback types

Count

		class	
		class one (n=60)	class two (n=150)
feedback types	recasts	29 (48%)	95 (63%)
	repetition	7 (12%)	21 (14%)
	explicit correction	6 (10%)	11 (7%)
	use of L1	4 (7%)	1 (1%)
	elicitation	6 (10%)	9 (6%)
	clarification requests	1 (2%)	5 (3%)
	invitation to other learners	5 (8%)	2 (1%)
	repetition requests	2 (3%)	6 (4%)

(Note: percentages have been rounded up or down to a whole number (using the simple rule that 0.5 and above are rounded up and below 0.5 are rounded down) to make the table easier to read.)

In spite of some similar predominance in general there are variations between the two teachers in terms of preferred feedback types. CT2 seemed more likely to use feedback by recasts than CT1, even though recasts were the favourite technique of the two teachers. Another difference is the number of corrective feedback using repetition, explicit correction, and elicitation techniques by CT1 were in general evenly distributed while CT2 seemed more likely to use repetition than the other two techniques (i.e., explicit correction and elicitation). The evidence that nearly 80% of CT2's corrective feedback was recasts and repetition suggests CT2 was more likely to use such reformulative techniques as recasts or repetition than CT1 who devoted approximately 60% of feedback to using these two techniques. Evidence also indicates that CT1 used more corrective feedback in L1 than CT2. Invitation to other learners to repair was relatively frequently used by CT1 but rarely used by CT2.

Evidence indicates that both teachers strongly preferred to use reformulative techniques, such as recasts, rather than such feedback types as clarification requests that prompted students to self-correct. Such a finding may indicate that both teachers have a similar preference for feedback types in general. When asked about whether they had preference for corrective feedback in response to learner errors, neither of them revealed they had personal preference for corrective feedback strategies in the interviews. When they were further asked about the reason why they employed a great number of recasts in their lessons, CT1 responded that by using recasts she could rapidly provide a correct answer for their learners (TA3:32). CT2 explained that they were encouraged to use recasts by an invited expert from some university. In the interview, she mentioned,

> … recasts do not destroy pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. If I say: no, you're wrong, which might embarrass those pupils who are shy. Some pupils are very shy. They even feel embarrassed when I ask them to repeat what I have said for several times. Secondly, some more able pupils might laugh at those less able ones if I say they're wrong. So I sometimes just provide a correct answer and ask them to repeat for a couple of times in order to reinforce it… (TB3:28).

CT1 regarded recasts as a prompt strategy to correct learner errors in lessons; however, she did not consider whether or not recasts in effect draw learners' attention to the error and subsequently facilitate L2 learning. CT2, using recasts to avoid embarrassing her learners when attending to learner errors, seemed to concern about 'face' (see Chapter 6 for further discussion).

4.4.4 Opportunity to use feedback

This section seeks answers to the last sub-question of RQ2: To what extent are the opportunities for using feedback different? As indicated in section 3.5.3, teacher's turns with corrective feedback was further coded in accordance with whether or not the feedback provided an opportunity for learners to make use of it (i.e. opportunities for learners to uptake).

Table 4.4. Opportunities for using feedback

			class		
			class one	class two	Total
opportunities for using feedback	yes	Count	38	91	129
		% within class	63.3%	60.7%	61.4%
	no	Count	22	59	81
		% within class	36.7%	39.3%	38.6%
Total		Count	60	150	210
		% within class	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

a. Computed only for a 2x2 table

b. X^2 = .041, df= 1, p=.840

Looking at Table 4.4, we can see that a total of 38 opportunities were provided by CT1 on the 13 EFL lessons observed, compared to 91 by the CT2. Nevertheless, CT1 immediately followed with a topic continuation in 22 occasions, compared to 59 in the case of CT2. From the perspective of what percentage of feedback involving an opportunity for learner uptake, 63.3% and 60.7% were identified in C1 and C2 respectively. Evidence shows, although CT1 provided a relatively smaller number of feedback turns than CT2 does, the two classes had a similar percentage of feedback that involved an opportunity for learners to modify their output. Chi-square tests reveal the value (X^2 = .041, df= 1, p>.05) suggesting that the proportion of opportunities for using feedback from C1 was not significantly different from that of C2. In other word, the statistics test shows the distribution of opportunities for using feedback was similar between C1 and C2.

Qualitative analysis of classroom observation data clearly demonstrates that the teachers sometimes immediately continued their turns without giving their students a chance to respond or other students to interrupt. This may be due to the teacher's drive to complete their teaching goals and to get on with the next topic. In the interview, C1 expressed:

> …time is tight. We have to complete our teaching objectives within certain period of time. … It's not possible to ask them (pupils) to repeat the correct answer all the time… (TA3:56).

C2 stated:

> It really depends on the particular teaching situation. Let's say, when the pupil speaks very fluently except for a minor error, such as third-person singular marker-s, I may just provide a correct form and continue lesson delivering straightforward. First of all, I try not to interrupt teaching flow sometimes. Secondly, I wish to save time as it's impossible to attend to every single error… (TB3:54).

It is worth noting that much of the feedback in the present study provided learners with an opportunity to modify their output (i.e. uptake). This finding is consistent with the results reported in Oliver and Mackey's (2003) study. In their study, 76% of total feedback in explicit language-focused exchanges was followed with an opportunity for primary school learners to modify their errors. However, this finding is different from the results reported in earlier research on L2 classrooms, in which teachers offered limited opportunities for primary school learners to modify their errors in response to corrective feedback (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997; Lyster 1998a; Lyster 1998b).

4.5 Learners' uptake

While the above sections have explored learner errors and corrective feedback, this section examines how corrective feedback is responded in the two classes (i.e. RQ3: To what extent is learner uptake different between the two classes?). As indicated in section 3.5.3, when an error occurs, the teacher may provide corrective feedback in response to it, and the feedback may offer the learner an opportunity to modify the error. Alternatively, the teacher may provide corrective feedback and then continue her turn without offering the learner an opportunity to modify their initial errors. When learners are given an opportunity to modify their errors, corrective feedback may lead to learner uptake. Learner uptake can be considered as successful or unsuccessful. Successful uptake (i.e. repair) defined as a result that occurs when a student can use the feature correctly or has understood the feature after a teacher's prompt. Such success does not imply that the feature has been acquired (Ellis *et al.* 2001). By contrast, unsuccessful uptake (i.e. needs-repair)

refers to uptake where an attempted repair fails. Feedback would lead to learner uptake when learners are given an opportunity to do so; learner uptake can be either repair or needs-repair. On the other hand, feedback would lead to no uptake[2] when the teacher does not provide learners with an opportunity to modify their errors.

This section compares learner's actual use of corrective feedback between C1 and C2. Table 4.5 indicates that corrective feedback provided by CT2 resulted in more responses than did CT1. Specifically, C2 learners managed to repair twice as many as that repaired in C1. However, if we interpret the table from the perspective of what percentage that repair presents in both classes, we will find that the percentage of learner repair (i.e., successful uptake) in C1 (58.3%) was slighter higher than that in C2 (50.7%). Three identified in C1 (5%) that still need repair, compared to C2 learners in 15 occasions (10%), probably suggesting C2 learners' attempts to correct errors were more likely to fail than C1 learners. A slightly higher percentage of C2's corrective feedback provided no opportunities to uptake than that of C1.

Table 4.5 Learner's responses to teacher's feedback

			learner responses			
			repair	needs-repair	no uptake	Total
class	class one	Count	35	3	22	60
		% within class	58.3%	5.0%	36.7%	100.0%
	class two	Count	76	15	59	150
		% within class	50.7%	10.0%	39.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	111	18	81	210
		% within class	52.9%	8.6%	38.6%	100.0%

a. $X^2 = 1.806$, df= 2, p= .405

The value of Chi-square ($X^2 = 1.806$, df= 2, p= .405) test shows there was no statistically significant difference between C1 and C2 in terms of the distribution of

[2]. In this study, no uptake is the outcome of no opportunities to uptake; that is to say, all corrective feedback that provides learners with an opportunity to repair results in either repair or needs-repair; no uptake, however, results from those occasions when there is a topic continuation immediately following teacher's corrective feedback turns.

three types of responses, suggesting the distribution of learner's responses between C1 and C2 was similar. Learner's higher response occurrences in C2 may result from the higher frequency of errors in the database. Although the total number of learner repair in C2 was higher than that of C1, a higher percentage of feedback was successfully used in C1.

4.6 Summary of findings relating to RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3

In summary, learners from C2 committed as many as two and half times errors as those in C1; this can be explained by the two participant teachers' differing methods of delivering lessons. CT2 spent more time on question-answer session and pair-work than CT1, who invested a great deal of time on practising phrases and dialogues. Arguably, pupils may be more likely to commit errors when they carry out question-answer sessions and pair-work than in those occasions when they practise phrases and dialogues. The different teaching methods may account for the discrepancy in the total number of errors between the two classes. However, both classes shared a similar proportion of the three error types. In each classroom, grammatical errors occurred with the highest frequency, accounting for more than 70% of total errors, with lexical errors being the least indicator of error type.

Despite the discrepancy in the frequency of errors between C1 and C2, both teachers attended to approximately 73% of total errors with corrective feedback in EFL classrooms. The relatively high response rates of errors may result from their similar perception of error treatment. Interview data indicates that both of them viewed error correction as a key in English teaching and learning. The evidence suggests that both teachers shared a tendency to correct learner errors in common. They were likely to attend to most of lexical and phonological errors; however, they paid no attention to approximately one third of grammatical errors.

Additionally, both teachers seemed to have a strong preference to use recasts over other feedback types such as clarification requests which may be likely to

encourage students to self-repair. The analysis of data indicates that both teachers had a similar tendency in using corrective feedback to attend to learner errors and preference for corrective feedback even though the total number of corrective feedback differed in both classes.

With respect to the opportunities to use corrective feedback, more than 60% of both teachers' corrective feedback provided learners with a chance to correct their errors. In terms of the use of corrective feedback, it was found that learners from both classes were often able to make use of feedback when they were given a chance to do so. In response to corrective feedback, evidence indicates that C1 learners responded to a slightly higher percentage of corrective feedback with learner repair than C2 learners. Although the two classes differed in the total number of learner errors, corrective feedback, and learner uptake, they shared some general practice of focus-on-form instructions in common.

4.7 Summary

This chapter has presented findings quantitatively, in which the results of classroom observation data have been presented in the sequence of three parts of focus-on-form episode (i.e. learner errors, corrective feedback and learner uptake). The comparisons regarding learner errors, corrective feedback and learner uptake have been carried out in the process of the description and analysis of focus-on-form instructions. The chapter has made a comparison in the focus-on-form instructions between C1 and C2, the following chapter, however, aims to examine the database as a whole to explore the focus-on-form instructions in the EFL setting.

Chapter 5 Focus-on-form Instructions

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter has examined the three parts of a focus-on-form episode, including learner errors, corrective feedback and learner uptake to examine the similarities and discrepancies of focus-on-form practices between the two classes. The first part of this chapter looks into the classroom observation data as a whole (see Appendix 7 for a summary description of a typical lesson) to explore to what extent are learner errors, corrective feedback related to learner uptake in the EFL context. As indicated by the preceding chapter, when learners were given a chance to correct their errors, they can make use of feedback provided by their teachers. The second part of this chapter illustrates lesson extracts from a qualitative perspective to demonstrate the way in which teachers drew learners' attention to an error in their EFL lessons and learners responded to the feedback as a result. Then, it presents a summary of the findings relating to RQ4; it concludes with a summary.

5.2 The relationship between errors, feedback and uptake

This section examines learner errors, corrective feedback in relation to learner uptake. It is worth noting here that this study investigates learner uptake immediately following corrective feedback rather than longer-term language development. This section seeks answers for RQ4 (i.e., To what extent are learner errors, corrective feedback related to learner uptake?).

5.2.1 Learner errors and corrective feedback

The distribution of corrective feedback types across different error types appears in Table 5.1. As indicated in the table, the two participant teachers employed recasts in response to 69% of total grammatical errors, 47% of phonological errors and one third of total phonological errors. Apart from recasts, they used repetition, accounting for 12%, to attend to grammatical errors, with the remaining 20% of grammatical errors being followed by the other feedback techniques. As for

phonological errors, following recasts, elicitation occurred with the second most frequency, responded to 18% of total phonological errors. Both teachers used repetition to attend to 13% of total phonological errors. With respect to lexical errors, recasts and repetition occurred with roughly equal frequency, attending to approximately 60% of the total lexical errors. The findings indicate that in response to learner's errors, corrective feedback in the form of recasts were used with the highest frequency irrespective of errors types that involved, with repetition and explicit correction came second and third respectively. Recasts as a single most frequently used feedback strategy, 72% (89 out of 124) of which were primarily used in response to learner's grammatical errors, with a relatively low rate following lexical errors.

Table 5.1 Distribution of errors receiving feedback (N=210)

Count		error types		
		grammatical errors (n=130)	phonological errors (n=62)	lexical errors (n=18)
feedback types	recasts (n=124)	89 (69%)	29 (47%)	6 (33%)
	repetition (n=28)	15 (12%)	8 (13%)	5 (28%)
	explicit correction (n=17)	9 (7%)	6 (10%)	2 (11%)
	use of L1 (n=5)	5 (4%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)
	elicitation (n=15)	3 (2%)	11 (18%)	1 (6%)
	clarification requests (n=6)	4 (3%)	0 (.0%)	2 (11%)
	invitation to other learners (n=7)	4 (3%)	2 (3%)	1 (6%)
	repetition requests (n=8)	1 (.8%)	6 (10%)	1 (6%)

Although the remaining corrective feedback techniques occurred much infrequently, the analysis of the data discloses the relationship between corrective feedback and learner errors. For instance, corrective feedback in the form of use of L1 predominantly attended to grammatical errors; more than 70% of repetition requests (six out of eight) and elicitation (11 out of 15) responded to phonological errors. In general, both teachers used elicitation and repetition requests to attend to phonological errors rather than other errors. Lexical errors had achieved a more equitable distribution than grammatical and phonological errors among all

feedback types. Two thirds of clarification requests were used to attend to learner's grammatical errors, with the remaining one third responding to lexical errors. However, this finding should be interpreted with caution due to the low occurrence of clarification requests in the database.

This section has addressed to what extent learner errors are related to corrective feedback. Subsequently, the next section examines learner errors in relation to learner uptake to determine what kinds of errors are more likely to result in learner uptake.

5.2.2 Learner errors and learner uptake

It should be noted, the number of each type of learner errors in Table 5.2 refers to those errors which receive corrective feedback from teachers rather than the total number of errors in the database. Table 5.2 presents the total number of errors that received corrective feedback and learner responses that resulted in, including uptake (i.e. repair or needs-repair) and no uptake. As indicated by Table 5.2, phonological errors resulted in the highest rates of repair, with nearly 70% of total phonological errors resulting in learner's repair. Lexical errors were repaired at a close rate to phonological ones, accounting for 67%. Grammatical errors, however, were repaired at the lowest rates among the three error types, accounting for 43%, although they occurred with the highest frequency.

Table 5.2 Distribution of learner responses across all error types

Count		learner responses		
		repair	needs-repair	no uptake
error types	grammatical errors (n=130)	56 (43%)	14 (11%)	60 (46%)
	phonological errors (n=62)	43 (69%)	2 (3%)	17 (27%)
	lexical errors (n=18)	12 (67%)	2 (11%)	4 (22%)

Phonological errors resulted in the lowest rate of needs-repair moves, accounting for 3%, with the relatively higher rates of 11% from grammatical and lexical errors respectively. As indicated in Chapter 4, no uptake in the study resulted from

corrective feedback that involved no opportunity for using it (see section 4.5 for details). Table 5.2 indicates teachers did not provide learners with an opportunity to modify output at the rate of 46% when attending to grammatical errors, while they seemed to be more willing to offer a chance when responding to phonological or lexical errors, accounting for 27% and 22% respectively.

5.2.3 Corrective feedback and learner uptake

Much recent research has demonstrated certain types of corrective feedback are more beneficial than others at encouraging learners to repair their errors (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997; Panova and Lyster 2002). This section aims to find out what types of corrective feedback were more likely to lead to learner uptake than others in the current study. Table 5.3 tabulated to show corrective feedback in relation to learner uptake summarises the frequency of corrective feedback and of which is followed by repair, needs-repair or no uptake.

Table 5.3 indicates that corrective feedback in the form of repetition requests, invitation to other learners and clarification requests appeared to be the most successful techniques for eliciting learner uptake. All corrective feedback turns containing repetition requests or invitation to other learners led to learner repair. As for clarification requests, even though uptake was high at 100%, learner repair occurred in 50% of the students' responses to clarification requests. However, this finding should be interpreted with caution due to their rarity.

In addition to corrective feedback in the form of repetition requests, invitation to other learners and clarification, Table 5.3 indicates that repetition, elicitation and use of L1 appeared to achieve learner's uptake of errors and were generally successful at encouraging learners to self-repair or peer-repair. Approximately 80% of the feedback turns with repetition, e licitation and use of L1 l ed to learner successful uptake (i.e. repair). In terms of the feedback strategy used in L1, learners corrected all errors that were responded by feedback in L1, when they were given

an opportunity to uptake. Again, this finding should also be interpreted with caution due to the low occurrence of use of L1 as a strategy in the database.

Table 5.3 Distribution of learner responses across feedback types

Count

		learner responses		
		repair	needs-repair	no uptake
feedback types	recasts (n=124)	50 (40%)	7 (6%)	67 (54%)
	repetition (n=28)	22 (79%)	5 (18%)	1 (4%)
	explicit correction (n=17)	5 (29%)	1 (6%)	11 (65%)
	elicitation (n=15)	12 (80%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)
	repetition requests (n=8)	8 (100%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)
	invitation to other learners (n=7)	7 (100%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)
	Clarification requests (n=6)	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	0 (.0%)
	use of L1 (n=5)	4 (80%)	0 (.0%)	1 (20%)
Total	N=210	111 (53%)	18 (9%)	81 (38%)

Looking at Table 5.3, we can also see the rates of repair following explicit correction and recasts were the lowest, at 29% and 40% respectively. Meanwhile, it also reveals that as many as 65% of explicit corrections as well as 54% of recasts eventually led to no uptake from learners. The analysis of classroom recording data indicates that on the 11 occasions when teachers provided explicit correction but then continued their turns without affording the learner an opportunity to correct the error. This may be one of the reasons that explicit correction achieved a low uptake rate. Similar to explicit correction, the low rate of repair following recasts can result from the relatively low number of opportunities that allowed for modification. Teachers do not give an opportunity for learners to modify their production in part because the function of recasts is to reformulate learner errors by implicitly providing the correct form, they do not necessarily require learner's reaction to it (Lyster 1998a).

Additionally, Table 5.3 indicates that corrective feedback in the form of clarification requests resulted in the highest needs-repair at the rates of 50%. 18% of teacher's repetition, 13% of elicitation, 6% of recasts and explicit correction respectively led to learner's partial use of the feedback (i.e. needs-repair). No

instances of partial use of feedback were found in the remaining three types of feedback. As to the relatively low rates of needs-repair, it is therefore claimed that learners can make use of teacher feedback when they are provided with an opportunity to do so.

As indicated in Chapter 4, learner uptake can be successful (i.e., repair) or unsuccessful (i.e., needs-repair), thus the rate of learner uptake from this study was 62% (53% repair + 9% needs-repair). That is, 129 learner turns (i.e. 111 repair turns and 18 needs-repair turns) actually contained learner uptake. As reported in Panova and Lyster's (2002) study, a lower rate of uptake (47% of total teacher feedback) and repair (18% of total teacher feedback) resulted in learner uptake; however, Sheen (2004) reported the highest level of uptake and repair- 82% and 56% of corrective feedback in effect resulted in learner uptake and repair. Comparing to the results reported in Lyster and Ranta (1997) that only 18% of recasts led to successful uptake, recasts (40%) in the study result in a relatively high level of successful uptake. Table 5.4 shows the rates of learner uptake and repair of corrective feedback and recasts across settings.

Table 5.4 Rate of uptake and repair across settings

	UPTAKE OF TOTAL CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK	REPAIR OF TOTAL CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK	UPTAKE OF RECASTS	REPAIR OF RECASTS
Canada Immersion	55%	27%	31%	18%
Canada ESL	47%	18%	40%	13%
NZ ESL	75%	59%	72%	48%
Korea EFL	82%	56%	83%	58%
China EFL	61%	53%	46%	40%

(Note: Canada Immersion: Lyster and Ranta (1997); Canada ESL: Panova and Lyster 2002; NZ ESL: Ellis *et al.* 2001a; Korea EFL: Sheen (2004); China EFL: this study)

Looking at Table 5.4, we will see the rates differ across the instruction contexts, thus, instructional contexts may play a role in the rate of learner uptake and repair. Panova and Lyster's (2002) study examined Canadian ESL lessons; Ellis *et al.* (2001a) explored Australian adult ESL classrooms; Sheen (2004) examined Korea

adult EFL classrooms; this study however examined China primary learners who learner English as a foreign language (see Chapter 6 for further discussion).

In addition, the evidence indicates that there was no uptake following approximately 39% of teachers' corrective feedback in this study. Oliver (2000), in a study of ESL classes reported a similar level of no uptake- approximately one third of the teachers' corrective feedback resulted in no uptake.

5.2.4 Summary

In the current study, the provision of corrective feedback in response to learner errors shows some degree of consistency. The teachers appeared to select feedback types in accordance with error types; the majority of recasts attended to grammatical errors; the majority of elicitation and repetition requests were used in response to phonological errors, with lexical errors achieving a relatively even distribution across feedback types. It is reasonable to assume that the two teachers in the study provided corrective feedback more consistently than teachers that reported in previous studies (e.g., Allwright 1975; Chaudron 1977). The fact that uptake was more likely in episodes involving lexical and phonological errors than grammatical errors, given that grammatical forms were predominantly followed by recasts and recasts were unlikely to promote learner uptake. The finding that recasts resulted in a low uptake rate is consistent with the findings that were found in previous studies (e.g., Ellis *et al.* 2001a; Lyster and Ranta 1997). The lower rate of learner uptake following recasts may lie in the fact that teachers occasionally did not provide learners with an opportunity to repair after recasting a learner error.

Explicit correction was in general less effective in promoting uptake than other types of feedback; the remaining feedback types (except for recasts) however achieved a relatively high level of learner uptake. The finding that recasts and explicit correction resulted in the lowest rate of learner uptake may be due to the fact that the function of recasts and explicit correction were to implicitly or

explicitly provide correct forms; they did not necessarily expect learners to respond to it. The most effective types were invitation to other learners and repetition requests; nevertheless, it should be cautious to interpret the finding due to their rarity in the database. However, in Lyster and Ranta's (1997) study, the most effective types were reported to be elicitation and clarification requests.

The analysis of classroom observation data yields the following focal findings:

1) Among all error types, grammatical errors were more likely to be followed by recasts, at the same time, resulting in the highest rates of no uptake; as a feedback technique, the use of L1 occurring with the lowest frequency, predominantly responded to grammatical errors;
2) Repetition requests and elicitation were more likely to deal with phonological errors that resulted in the lowest rate of needs-repair. Low rate of needs-repair from phonological errors can be interpreted that learners were capable of modifying the phonological errors when they were given a chance to do so;
3) Among all feedback types, explicit correction was the first prominent indicator of no uptake, with recasts being the most frequently used corrective feedback resulted in the second highest rates of no uptake; one reason may lie in the fact that while employing explicit correction and recasts in response to learner errors, both teachers allowed learners with the least opportunities for correcting their errors.
4) The highest rates of learner uptake (100%) occurred with repetition requests, invitation to other learners and clarification requests, in part because clarification, invitation to other learners and repetition requests, by definition, always provided an opportunity for uptake to take place. However, it should be more cautious to interpret this finding due to their rarity in the database.
5) Repetition and elicitation that occurred with the second and third highest rate of frequency respectively, received a relatively high rate of uptake, resulting in only one example of no uptake in each category. Repetition, by definition, expects learners to provide a reaction to the feedback in which teachers repeat

the student's errors with an emphasized intonation. Elicitation, by nature, also expects learners to provide a response to it.

From a more quantitative perspective, this section has examined to what extent are learner errors, corrective feedback related to learner uptake in the EFL setting. Next I investigate lessons transcripts from a qualitative perspective to elaborate on the specifics of the five points mentioned above.

5.3 Qualitative analysis of classroom observation data

In this section, extracts were selected from lesson transcripts to illustrate the actual practices of focus-on-form in the EFL lessons. The following extracts from lesson observations were selected on the grounds that they were firstly representative of the different focus-on-form practices, and secondly, they provided evidence to support the argument. Interviews with the two participant teachers as well as discursive commentary from the researcher were also included. Each illustrated example is presented together with a reference to the source (see section 4.3.2 for details). I selected examples from database together with references indicating the location to elaborate on the major findings that were reported in the preceding sections.

5.3.1 Recasts as a feedback strategy

The quantitative analysis of classroom data reveals that grammatical errors occurred with the highest frequency among the three types of errors; however, they achieved the lowest rate of learner uptake. In the meantime, the analysis indicates that both teachers used recasts to attend to nearly 70% of total grammatical errors. The fact that recasts were less effective at eliciting learner uptake may result in the finding that grammatical errors were unlikely to achieve learner uptake. Qualitative data analysis demonstrates that both teachers sometimes did not provide learners an opportunity to repeat their reformulation of learner's errors. Example 1 demonstrates that a grammatical error that was followed by teacher's recasts

subsequently achieved no uptake.

Example 1: grammatical errors achieved no uptake

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
364.	*P26: Wu yifan visit his grandma on Saturday morning.*	Grammatical errors
365.	T: Visited. P30, continue, no.2.	Recasts (No opportunity to uptake)
366.	P30: Sunday morning, he played…	Topic continuation

Source: [B5: 364-366] (see Section 4.3.2 for a reference to the source)

The sequence in Example 1 occurred when P26 was invited to finish a sentence[1] on page 30 of their activity books. P26 picked a right word but in wrong tense, which was coded as grammatical errors. The teacher responded to the learner's error with a reformulation, modifying learner's utterance by adding past tense marker- ed. Right after her recasts, the teacher continued with another activity by inviting P30 to give an answer to the next sentence on that page. As indicated by the example, the teacher did not offer an opportunity for the error originator (P26) to repeat her recasts. The result that the learner did not provide an uptake in the example can be attributed to the fact that the teacher did not provide an opportunity for a learner uptake to take place.

Although the analysis of data suggests that recasts following grammatical errors were unlikely to lead to learner uptake, recasts as the single most frequently used technique can lead to uptake when learners were given an opportunity to do so. The below example illustrates that grammatical errors that was followed by corrective feedback in the form of recasts led to learner repair.

Example 2: grammatical errors with recasts achieve repair

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
126.	*P13: Where do you go on your holiday?*	Grammatical errors
127.	P18: I *	P18 is interrupted by T
128.	{T: Where did you go on your holiday?	Recasts
129.	{P13: Where did you go on your holiday?	Repetition-repair

Source: [B10:126-129]

The lesson objective of the above episode was to practice two sentence structures:

[1] (1) Wu Yifan _____ his grandma on Saturday morning.

'what did you go on your holiday?', and 'what did you do there?' After practising with the whole class, pupils were required to find a partner to make a dialogue with the two targeted question structures. The above episode occurred when P13 and P18 were nominated to practice their newly-made dialogue in front of whole class. P13 provided an error in turn 126. P18's utterance was interrupted by the teacher who reformulated a correct answer in past tense in turn 128. Following the teacher's reformulation, P13 promptly repaired his original answer in turn 129.

Comparing episodes involving learner uptake to those that resulted in no uptake, an interesting point was found from the qualitative analysis of classroom interaction. When a recast occurred after the nominated pupil had finished his/her answer as such an instance as Example 1 above, the teacher normally proceeded with a topic continuing after her recasts; on the other hand, those recasts led to other forms of uptake such as repetition-repair, when a learner's utterance was interrupted by the teacher's recasts. In the latter occasions where an opportunity was given, learners would possibly repair the error (see Example 2 for an instance). The evidence indicates that learner's no uptake that resulted from teachers' recasts following grammatical errors occurred with the highest frequency in the present study. In part because the teachers always continued with their turns after recasting student's utterances, not waiting for a student to respond and not appearing to expect the student to provide a reaction to the feedback. Or this is perhaps a reflection of the teachers' concern for limited class time, during which they had other pedagogical objectives to cover (TA3: 56; TB3:54).

5.3.2 The use of L1 as a feedback strategy

The analysis of data demonstrates that the use of L1 occurred with the lowest frequency in response to learner errors, nevertheless, it achieved as high as 80% of uptake rates. Qualitative data analysis shows that pupils were capable of modifying their errors with teacher's prompt in L1, when they were provided with an opportunity to do so.

Example 3: use of L1 as a feedback strategy

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
22.	*P5: How long are you legs?*	Grammatical errors
23.	T: Where is the error (Chinese)?	T was addressing the whole class, while elicited the question.
24.	Ps: Your.	Peer-repair

Source: [B1: 22-24]

The pedagogical focus of this episode was to check answers to the exercises in their activity books. Nominated pupil-P5 was required to fill in a sentence for a conversation[2] from the textbook. As indicated in Example 3, P5 produced an utterance with a grammatical error in which he employed pronoun-you instead of possessive marking-your. CT2 exploited L1 to draw learners' attention to the learner error and it led to peer-repair in turn 24. This is one of five examples that demonstrate how participant teachers deal with errors by using L1. The teachers interview data indicating they were encouraged to deliver English in target language (TA3:124; TB3:87) may account for the low occurrence of use of L1 as a corrective feedback in the database. As we can see from the above example, such a prompt from the teacher as indicated in turn 23 by nature, invited an uptake to take place. Thus, it is not surprising to find that learners modified their output when a teacher employed L1 to attend to a learner error as such an instance as Example 3 above.

5.3.3 Elicitation as a feedback strategy

The analysis of data suggests that feedback strategy in the form of elicitation was more likely to deal with phonological errors. The evidence indicates that 74% of total teacher turns with elicitation attended to learner's production containing a phonological error, with the remaining one quarter dealing with grammatical and lexical errors. It also shows that 80% of teacher turns with elicitation achieved learner uptake. The following example demonstrates CT2's elicitation to attend to a

---

2 --- _____?

---My legs are 96 cm long.

phonological error achieved learner uptake.

Example 4: phonological errors are followed by elicitation

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
117.	*P7: Rowed (/red/)* *	Phonological errors
118.	Ps: Rowed a boat	Peer-scaffolding
119.	T: Together	Elicitation
120.	Ps: Rowed a boat	Peer-repair

Source: [B6:117-120]

In this extract, CT2 and pupils had been working on the lesson target: reviewing phrases in past tense that were delivered in the previous lesson. In the lesson, while the teacher one by one showed cards with phrases and pictures, pupils were required to read the corresponding phrase shown. In this episode, P7 was called on to read a phrase (rowed a boat); however, he failed to enunciate the phrase clearly, which sounded like 'red a boat', resulting in a phonological error in turn 117. Almost simultaneously, several peers provided with a correct pronunciation without being nominated in turn 118. Rather than providing an opportunity for P7 to self-correct, CT2 promptly responded with an elicitation addressing the whole class. In response to CT2's prompting, pupils produced with a correct pronunciation in chorus in turn 120 correspondingly. Probably because of peers' quick response, CT2 continued with her lesson delivering, without giving P7, who originally initiated the error, an opportunity to repair. Pupils' peer-scaffolding as well as peer-repair in the above extract somewhat demonstrate their active engagement in classroom activities.

As indicated in the above episode, rather than addressed to P7 particularly, CT2 questioned the whole class, which resulted in peer-repair in the next turn. Interestingly, the investigation of C2's database suggests that all CT2's turns containing elicitation eventually led to peer-repair in chorus rather than learner uptake in other forms. One possible explanation may lie in the fact that CT2 always elicited a question to the whole class when she chose to use elicitation to attend to an error in lessons. CT2 provided a reason in the interview:

> I think it saves class time. By questioning the whole class, I can not only draw the

> nominated pupil's attention to the particular language point, but also from the rest ... (TB3:50).

5.3.4 Repetition requests as a feedback strategy

In addition to the result that elicitation tended to deal with phonological errors, the analysis of classroom data also revealed corrective feedback in the form of repetition requests appeared to attend to phonological errors. Repetition requests refers to the strategy in which a teacher asks pupils to read after her when an error (normally phonological) occurs, such as 'read after me'. The findings suggest that the two participant teachers provided repetition requests somewhat consistently at least in the three ways: i) firstly, teachers' repetition requests were overwhelming followed by learner's choral responses; ii) secondly, although its occurrence was relatively low in the database (n=8), it received the highest rate of learner repair (i.e. all teacher's turns with repetition requests achieved learner repair); iii) the analysis of data also indicates that this form of strategy generally occurred after recasts.

The below episode happened after a nominated pupil (P13) finished her story[3] telling. P13 produced a phonological error in turn 15, in which she failed to clearly pronounce word- neck; nevertheless, CT2 did not interrupt P13 until she finished her story time. CT2 implicitly corrected it in the first place, and then continued with repetition requests inviting whole class pupils to read after her. Subsequently, pupils came up with a satisfying pronunciation of neck jointly in turn 22. From the analysis of the transcripts, it is worth noting that teacher's turn with repetition requests overwhelmingly received choral repetition from her learners.

Example 5: phonological errors are followed by repetition requests

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
15.	P13: ... *Your neck is too long...*	Phonological errors (neck here sounds like /lek/)
21.	T: Ok, neck Neck, read after me.	recasts Repetition requests
22.	Ps: Neck...	Repetition-repair

Source: [B12:21]

[3] Al most every lesson begins with three-minute 'story time', during which Pupils from both cases were required to recite the stories that they had prepared before hand. Titles of the stories were assigned by the teacher.

One possible explanation can be the way in which the two participant teachers dealt with phonological errors. When asked how they dealt with phonological errors in the interviews, CT1 explained:

> In order to impress them with some particular features, I normally ask them to read after me for several times in class (TA3: 18).

CT2 revealed:

> I may either ask them… to repeat the particular feature individually…., or read after jointly… (TB3:16).

The two participant teachers addressed that they were likely to invite learners to read after them when attending to a phonological error in the class. This can be one likely reason that such an episode as Example 5 resulted in choral responses. The evidence indicates that teachers generally allowed learner uptake to take place when responding to a phonological error. The highest uptake rate that phonological errors received may result from the way teachers attended to them.

5.3.5 Invitation to other learners as a feedback strategy

Apart from repetition requests, the analysis of data indicates that another feedback strategy that was labelled as invitation to other learners to repair also resulted in 100% of repair rates (i.e. all feedback turns involving this strategy lead to learner successful uptake). Invitation to other learners refers to the strategy by which a teacher invites another pupil to correct an error, such as, 'who will try?' or 'P1, you please'. The section demonstrates the way in which how corrective feedback with an invitation to other learners achieved a high rate of uptake in the particular teaching environments.

Example 6: invitation to other learners as a feedback strategy

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
82.	T: What can you see?	T initiates a question
83.	P5: *A fly*	Lexical errors
84.	T: You can see a FLY? P20, you please?	Repeating with emphasized stress Invitation to other learners to repair
85.	{Ps: A fly (in Chinese)	Some pupils are shouting and laughing
86.	P20: I can see a bird.	Peer-repair

Source: [A9:83-86]

In this extract, CT1 and pupils had been working on the lesson target: learning new words and phrases. The teacher used cards with phrases and pictures as stimuli to question-answer sessions encouraging learners to use English. In this episode, CT1 elicited a question: what can you see? P5 who was called on to tell the peers what he actually saw from the picture, replied that he saw a fly. P5's answer involved a lexical error, as the particular card in fact showed a bird that was flying. In response to the lexical error in his answer in turn 83, CT1 promptly responded with a repetition turn. Rather than providing an opportunity for P5 to self-correct, CT1 invited another learner - P20 to correct the error. In response to CT1, P20 gave a correct answer in turn 86. Concurrently, several pupils laughed at the response that P5 produced in turn 85 whispering the meaning of fly in Chinese. Although the pupils' response in the above extract seems like humiliation (i.e. turn 85), it somewhat demonstrates their noticing to incorrect answers; on the other hand, their reactions showed their full engagement in classroom activities.

5.3.6 Clarification requests as a feedback strategy

The evidence from the database indicates that although clarification requests occurred with a low frequency, it achieved as high as 100% rate of learner uptake in database (i.e. all feedback turns involving clarification requests led to learner uptake). In spite of the high rate of uptake, one third of which resulted in uptake in the form of needs-repair. Example 7 happened when CT1 and pupils had been working on the lesson target: understanding ordinal numbers; practising twelve months in English language. CT1 tried to link the twelve months in English with 12 ordinal numbers from the first to the twelfth. CT1 carried out an activity with pupils jointly: when CT1 said an ordinal number, pupils were required to say a corresponding month in English, and vice versa. For example, when CT1 said 'January', pupils were supposed to say 'the first' in response to her. It should be noted that the below episode took place where pupils were required to perform the classroom activity jointly rather than individually.

Example 7: clarification requests receive repair

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
38.	T: February, you may say (.)?	T initiates a question.
39.	*Ps: Second.*	Grammatical errors
40.	{Ps: The second	Correct form
41.	T: PARDON?	Clarification requests
42.	Ps: The second.	Self-repair

Source: [A1:38-41]

In line 38, CT1 provided an effective teacher questioning strategy by means of asking a leading question which was responded by pupils in turn 39 containing a grammatical error and a correct form in turn 40 concurrently. It is worth noting here that majority of students responded with a reply in turn 39, with the minority giving a correct form in turn 40. Clarification request (PARDON?), with a rising and emphasized tone, was made by the teacher in the line 41 in response to the majority learner's error (a definite article- the being missed). Subsequently, pupils promptly corrected the error by saying 'the second' in turn 42, which was coded as a self-repair move. This may result from the teacher's rising and exaggerated tone in line 41, which in some way suggests their utterance containing an error. Clarification requests in this episode achieved a successful uptake as a response from pupils. As data shown, clarification requests were likely to be followed by learner uptake, partly because, clarification requests when applied, involved an opportunity to for uptake to take place.

5.3.7 Explicit correction as a feedback strategy

The analysis of classroom data suggests that feedback strategy in the form of explicit correction resulted in the lowest rate of learner repair. The analysis of transcripts suggests the fact that participant teachers rarely provided their learners an opportunity to modify their output after explicitly correcting their errors may account for it. Explicit correction, by definition, has provided learners with a correct answer, which probably does not require learners to repeat it.

Example 8: explicit correction as a feedback

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
148.	P16: … *He went to skating on his holiday…*	Grammatical errors
149.	T: He went skating not went to skating. Now turn to page 29, match and number…	Explicit correction No opportunity for uptake; T starts with a topic continuation

Source: [B14:148-149]

The pedagogical objective of the above episode was to understand a listening passage and to finish the following exercises accordingly. After listening to the tape recorder twice, pupils were required to finish the gap-filling on page 28 of their activity books afterwards. The episode took place when P16 was required to fill in a sentence for the passage[4]. P16 produced an utterance with a grammatical error in turn 148. The teacher responded with a corrective feedback strategy in the form of explicit correction, explicitly providing the pupil with a corrective form in turn 149. There was no evidence showing P16's uptake in this episode, as the teacher offered no opportunity for P16 to do so. This episode is one of those examples from classroom interaction, in which the teacher continued with a new topic right after providing explicit correction.

The evidence indicates that similar to recasts, feedback strategy in the form of explicit correction was unlikely to receive responses from learners, with less than 1/3 of the total explicit correction turns resulting in learner successful uptake. The finding that explicit correction achieved such a low uptake rate was probably attributed to the low rate of opportunities that provided for learners to repair. This is partly because teachers always continued with their turns right after explicitly correcting student's utterances, not providing a student a chance to provide a reaction to the feedback. Or this is perhaps a reflection of the teachers' concern for time pressure, during which they had other pedagogical requirements to fulfil (TA3:56; TB3:54).

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[4] Listen again and finish the passage.
…Andy lives in Toronto. He _____ on his holiday. He _____, too.

In addition, the investigation of classroom transcripts containing explicit correction came up with another interesting finding that pupils can correct their errors when they were given a chance to do so. This finding further confirms that the lowest rate of explicit correction resulted from insufficient opportunities that explicit feedback involved rather than learner's incapability to repair their errors.

5.3.8 Repetition as a feedback strategy

The analysis of data indicates that corrective feedback in the form of repetition occurred with the second highest frequency among all corrective feedback types in the database. The evidence shows repetition achieved a relatively high rate of uptake, with only one example resulting in no uptake. The high rate of uptake from repetition partly because, by definition, it expects learners to provide a reaction to the feedback in which the teacher repeats the learner's errors and highlights it with an adjusted intonation.

Example 9: repetition is followed by self-repair

LINE	TRANSCRIPTS	ANNOTATION
130.	*P18: I went to (.) I went to a park on your holiday**	Grammatical errors
131.	T: ON YOUR HOLIDAY?	Repetition
132.	P18: On my holiday.	Self-repair

Source: [B10:130-132]

This episode was extracted from the lesson when they just came back from a two-week holiday. In order to give pupils a chance to use English in lessons, CT2 began her class with a question: what did you do on your holiday. Pupils were invited to tell the whole class how they spent their holidays when they were called on. P18 was invited to share his experience with peers. Although he originally provided an inappropriate utterance in turn 130, he immediately modified his original production after CT2's prompting in line 131 with a rising tone. Similar to Example 9, the analysis of remaining transcripts with repetition suggests that two participant teachers always provided learners with an opportunity to modify their output after repeating their errors with an adjusted intonation.

5.4 Summary of findings relating to RQ4

As indicated above, both teachers employed a variety of corrective feedback strategies to attend to learner errors in EFL lessons. Among all feedback types, recasts were the single most used strategy, accounting for nearly 60% of the total corrective feedback turns. Interview data indicate that both teachers were concerned about not embarrassing a learner and time pressure when attending to learner errors.

In spite of the highest frequency, recasts resulted in a low rate of uptake, occurring with the second lowest next to explicit correction. More specifically, the evidence indicates 54% of recasts received no uptake from learners. This finding can be explained by the evidence that teachers always continued with their turns after reformulating a learner error in lessons. The analysis suggests that corrective feedback in the form of explicit correction was the least likely to receive responses from learners, with 65% of which resulting in no uptake. It is probably because explicit correction, by definition, explicitly supplying the correct form and clearly indicating what the learner has said was incorrect, did not expect learners to provide a reaction to the feedback. Alternatively, this is probably because teachers had a tight control of time that did not allow learners to correct their errors.

The findings that explicit correction and recasts most of time either led to repair or to no uptake at all parallel the findings that were reported in other studies (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997). Apart from recasts, participant teachers tended to use repetition to prompt pupils to correct their errors. Repetition that occurred with the second predominance resulted in a high level of learner uptake, approximately 79% of teacher turns with repetition feedback result in learner successful uptake. This can be explained by the evidence that participant teachers always provided learners an opportunity to correct the error after repeating the error with a rising intonation. This may be teacher's rising tone, which in some way suggests an utterance containing an error, and draws learners' attention to it. In addition to repetition,

repetition requests, invitation to other learners and clarification requests received a high rate of learner uptake, probably because, these three feedback strategies, by definition, provide learners with an opportunity to attend to feedback.

Meanwhile, the analysis of data indicates that the recasts were more likely to follow learner's grammatical error; but not phonological and lexical errors. Observation data also shows that repetition requests and elicitation that received higher rate of learner uptake were more likely to deal with learner's phonological errors. The analysis of data shows that learner uptake was more likely to occur when the focus was pronunciation and vocabulary rather than grammar. As indicated above, recasts led to a lower rate of uptake, in the meantime, repetition requests and elicitation invited a higher rate of responses from learners. This can partly explain why grammatical errors resulted in the lowest rate of uptake; on the other hand, phonological and lexical errors achieved relatively high rates among the three types of errors. I argue that learners have attended to the feedback most of the time, as they modified their errors when they were provided with an opportunity to do so.

The analysis of data indicates that some corrective feedback resulted in choral responses. Those choral responses were attributed to the fact that the two participant teachers sometimes chose to draw attention from the whole class rather than individuals. Therefore, in some cases, the whole class rather than individuals were encouraged to produce an uptake. When CT2 was asked in the interview why she sometimes chose to address questions to the individuals, sometimes to the whole class, she revealed that she did it consciously. She would question the whole class when she realized other learners may also make the same error as the nominated pupil did; on the other hand, if her knowledge told her most others may have acquired the form, she would then paid attention to the error initiator rather than the whole class (TB3: 139). The culture in the current study is different from other studies where feedback studies have been undertaken. This study took place

in China where English teachers have a tight control over lessons. The teacher who is perceived as both a guide and a language expert manages the process of learning. The teacher has a tight control over learner's production and behaviour in the classroom, the students who come to the lesson as subordinates, do whatever their teachers require them to do.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has presented major findings from the current study in a more qualitative way. The findings indicate that both teachers attended to errors in a more consistent way than that were reported in the previous studies. The evidence additionally indicates the finding that some corrective feedback techniques were more likely to encourage learners to uptake than others is consistent with some previous feedback studies. In addition, the analysis of data demonstrates learners' capability of correcting errors after a teacher's prompt. This Chapter and Chapter 4 have presented findings from the current study; the following chapter discusses the findings from a more theoretical perspective.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The dissertation has outlined the aims, the context, the research design and the outcome of the study in the preceding chapters, this chapter aims to elaborate on the results in the light of the contribution to the existing literature. It begins with a summary of the findings that were delineated in Chapter 4 & Chapter 5. Then it integrates the findings into previous studies that were outlined in the literature review chapter to demonstrate how the findings relate to others in this area to date.

6.2 Summary of the findings

This section gives an overview of the results of the current study, and provides explanations for the results that were found in this study. The current research is directed at examining what kinds of errors were produced, how errors were corrected and what effects that different types of corrective feedback may have on learner uptake in an EFL setting at the level of primary schools. It has examined the patterns of error treatment in two EFL communicative classrooms. The analysis of the lesson transcripts allows comparison to be made between the two classes in terms of learner errors and corrective feedback responding to learner errors and learner uptake following corrective feedback. To start with, I shall summarise findings in relation to learner errors.

6.2.1 Learners' errors

The first research question asked about to what extent are the total number of errors and distribution of each error type different between the two classrooms. The results of this study have demonstrated the differences in the total number of errors, with the suggestion that the distribution of error types was similar between the two classrooms (see Section 4.3.1 for details). This finding raised a question concerning why C2 learners produced more errors than did C1 within the same unit of observed lessons (13 lessons from each classroom). A likely explanation to the differences is the differing teaching styles of both teachers. Despite some teaching

procedures shared, CT1 paid more attention to whole-class activities, and considered pair-work unnecessary; conversely, CT2 put more weight on pair-work and question-answer section while delivering lessons. One likely reason is that pupils may attend less to form when they are answering questions or performing pair-work. This explains why C1 learners made fewer errors than that in C2.

Despite a significant difference in the frequency of learner errors, the results indicated that error types as well as the distribution of each error type were similar. Among all error types, learners from either C1 or C2 were more likely to produce grammatical errors than others. The most likely explanation for this finding is that English grammar was not the focus of earlier English education according to national curriculum requirement in China. As proposed in a recent Chinese government document, earlier English education in China aims to spark students' interest and build their confidence in English learning; it also aims to enable learners to form into a good habit of English learning, cultivate right attitudes towards English, have a solid foundation in pronunciation and intonation, and gain a basic level of communication (Fundamental requirements of English curriculum and teaching in primary schools, 2001).

The analysis of lesson transcripts suggests that both teachers' approach to grammar was not pre-planned; that is, they took decision about language points to focus on interactively, usually on the basis of problems students had during lessons. Some of the strategies that both teachers utilized were reactive rather than pre-emptive in nature. Interviews data indicated that both teachers did not teach students systematic written grammar in the lesson, in accordance with 'primar y school English curriculum requirement' enacted by the Minister of Education. According to the examination of the teaching materials, the layout of the teaching materials is more in the form of communicative activities that involve integrated skills rather than some separate skills; English is instructed through games, songs, dialogues, role-play and story-telling. Both nature of the curriculum and the teaching

materials indicate that grammar is not the focus of earlier English education in China. In the light of evidence, it is not surprising to find that grammatical errors were more salient than other errors in learner's production.

Another interesting finding from the current study indicated that 11% of total student turns contained an error; this rate was lower than other previous studies (e.g., 34% was reported in Lyster and Ranta's (1997) study. The observation data and field notes of the current study suggest that both teachers kept a tight control over learner's language production and played a crucial role in the construction of classroom interaction. By contrast, learners were often restricted to a responding role in lessons, and did what teachers required them to do. Accordingly, Oliver (2000) provided evidence that teacher's tight control of classroom interaction may reduce the possibility of errors.

6.2.2 Teachers' corrective feedback

The second research question was "To what extent is the provision of corrective feedback to learner errors different between the two classes?" This research question consisted of four sub-questions, which examined teacher feedback in terms of the total number, the tendency (i.e. what kind of errors teachers tend to ignore, what sort they are likely to attend to), the preference (preferred corrective feedback types) and the opportunities to use corrective feedback.

The results revealed that different corrective feedback varied in frequency but not in types between C1 and C2. A major finding regarding corrective feedback was that the number of corrective feedback in C2 was much bigger than that in C1 (C1=60; C2=150); the larger number of corrective feedback in C2, however, was largely subject to more errors committed in the classroom (C1=83; C2=205). In spite of large difference in numbers, the results suggested both teachers attended to a similar proportion of errors with corrective feedback in lessons (i.e. each teacher attended to 73% of learner errors with corrective feedback, also, see section 4.4.1.

for more details). This is perhaps a reflection of teachers' perception on attention to form. Interview data suggested that both teachers were often willing to attend to learner errors in lessons. This may explain why both teachers in this study attended to learner errors in EFL lessons at a higher level than that reported in other studies.

Regarding the tendency of corrective feedback, one of the most significant findings which emerged was that both teachers had a general tendency in common. One major finding related to the rate of correction of grammatical errors seemed to be lower than the other two error types. The findings suggested that both teachers seemed to correct most of phonological and lexical errors, with one or two of each category being ignored respectively; by contrast, they did not attend to approximately 1/3 of grammatical errors in their observed lessons respectively (see Section 4.4.2 for details). One possible explanation of this finding could be the large volume of grammatical errors that occurred in their lessons. Given the constraint of time, teachers were unable to attend to all grammatical errors that emerged. By contrast, learners committed fewer instances of errors in the form of lexicon and phonology, which made it possible for teachers to attend to in most cases. Another likely reason for this finding lies in the fact that teaching focus was more on pronunciation rather than grammar, in accordance with national curriculum.

Another finding from the analysis related to corrective feedback types that both teachers employed when attending to learner errors. Evidence showed that both teachers were engaged with feedback to attend to learner errors in their respective lessons. Evidence indicates that both teachers shared some general preference in common. One similarity was that both teachers clearly displayed a preference for recasts over other feedback strategies to respond to learner errors; however, neither of them frequently used clarification requests, repetition requests or use of L1 as a feedback strategy. Meanwhile, the evidence also demonstrated some variations between them regarding the frequency of different feedback types. The analysis of

data indicated that CT2 seemed more willing to use recasts and repetition to attend to learner errors than CT1 who, on the other hand, seemed more likely to use feedback with explicit correction, elicitation and invitation to other learners than CT2 (see Section 4.4.3 for details). The findings suggest that both teachers had a slightly different preference for feedback types even though they shared some general preference in common.

One possible reason for the fact that both teachers strongly preferred to use corrective feedback with recasts may relate to time pressure, a point claimed by them during interviews. Both teachers explained the time was tight, during which they had to cover all pedagogical requirements, which also concurred with the classroom observations and field notes. The other reason for high use of recasts may relate to embarrassment issue which was in effect inconsistent with their positive viewpoint of learner errors during interview. Neither of them viewed committing errors as face-threatening when participant teachers were asked about their views on learner errors in the interview. For example, CT1 explained she expected learners to make linguistics errors because they gave her signal as whether or not to re-explain the language feature. Nevertheless, when asked about why they extensively used recasts as feedback, both teachers claimed to be concerned with avoiding embarrassing their learners when giving feedback to learner errors. They considered recasts to be a non-face-threatening corrective feedback technique. Interestingly, all pupils who were interviewed individually revealed that they wished to be corrected when they made an error in class. They considered error correction unproblematic and non-face-losing situation in L2 classroom irrespective of what language proficiency level that individuals possessed. This is not surprising, because some previous studies also reported that majority of second and foreign language learners regarded corrections as essential and want to be corrected regularly (e.g., Havranek 2002).

Additionally, the students' low proficiency level may account for the high

occurrence of recasts in the database. Learner's low proficiency level may not have allowed the teacher to use other corrective feedback types (e.g., clarification requests) that invite greater student participation in negotiating meaning or form. That is, the students' limited linguistic resources may have predisposed the teacher to extensively rely on reformulation techniques, such as recasts. As claimed by Panova and Lyster (2002), learner's low proficiency may contribute to the high predominance of recasts in the classrooms. Evidence that proficiency level may affect teachers' choice of feedback can be also found in Lyster and Ranta's (1997) study. From the perspective of teachers themselves, both of them perhaps are more confident in using recasts when attending to form due to the constraint of language proficiency. As a foreign language learner of English, teachers who may not fully master the target language perhaps have viewed recasts as a suitable strategy for providing exemplars of the target language. Given the constraint of language ability, it is not very surprising to find both teachers frequently used feedback with recasts in the observed lessons.

Regarding the opportunity to use feedback, the results showed that much of feedback provided opportunities for learners to produce modified output. Both teachers had a similar proportion of feedback (i.e., C1=63%; C2=60%) that provided learners with an opportunity to correct the error, in spite of varied frequency (see Section 4.4.4 for details). The teachers' interview data indicated that both of them were concerned that due to time pressure they were not able to provide students with an opportunity to correct every error they made.

6.2.3 Learners' uptake

While teacher's responses to a learner error have been considered, it is also important to consider the student's responses to the feedback. The findings indicated both teachers gave intense feedback to attend to learner errors and much of feedback provided learners with an opportunity to uptake. Nevertheless, the fact whether learners took advantage of the opportunity to modify output was a

significant issue to explore. The third research question was therefore concerned with learner's responses following corrective feedback. An interesting finding regarding learner's use of corrective feedback suggested that both teachers' corrective feedback resulted in a similar proportion of learner's responses even though a slightly higher rate of repair was identified in C1. Results also implied that learners were often capable of modifying their output when they were given a chance to do so (examples from lesson transcripts were illustrated in section 5.3).

6.2.4 Learner errors, corrective feedback and uptake

The last research question addressed the issue about to what extent learner errors, corrective feedback were related to learner uptake. Evidence from the current study demonstrated a tendency in favour of recasts to attend to grammatical errors that were more likely to result in no uptake than other errors. Elicitation and repetition were likely to follow phonological errors that appeared to achieve the highest rate of learner repair (i.e. successful uptake). Despite the lowest occurrence in the database, lexical errors that were evenly distributed among all feedback types achieved the highest rate of learner uptake.

A major finding of this study was, in general, recasts and explicit correction were less effective at inducing learners to uptake than others. The results revealed that explicit correction received the lowest rate of learner uptake, including the lowest rate of learner repair (i.e. successful uptake). Next to explicit correction, recasts received the second lowest rate of learner uptake, even though it was the overwhelmingly preferred feedback in the database. Results from qualitative data analysis suggested both teachers were more likely to immediately continue their turns with another topic when providing corrective feedback with recasts or explicit correction than others. By contrast, when providing corrective feedback with other techniques, such as elicitation, teachers often provided an opportunity for an uptake to take place. Panova and Lyster (2002) argue that explicit correction or recasts have provided learners a correction and do not necessarily require learner response.

In this study, the teachers who have a tight control over classroom activities in effect determine whether or not provide learners with an opportunity to uptake after attending to form, even though the nature of explicit correction and recasts may also play a part in the low rate of uptake that results in.

Another interesting finding of the current study related to pupils' choral repetition as a response to teacher's corrective feedback. This was a distinctive feature in comparison with others where feedback studies have been undertaken. Given the fact that choral responses were not done on individual basis, it seemed reasonable to claim that choral responses did not suggest that everybody had acquired the particular linguistics feature. It would be argued here, although choral responses were incapable of demonstrating that individuals had produced a correct form, they somewhat demonstrated that the majority of learners had acknowledged and attended to form after a teacher's prompt. As discussed earlier in the literature review chapter (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997), uptake is defined as a learner's utterance that immediately followed the teacher's corrective feedback. In this respect, choral responses were consistent with this definition; they thus were considered as an evidence of learner uptake in the current study.

6.3 Discussing findings in relation to existing knowledge

Following a summary of the findings, this section relates the findings with the results of previous feedback studies. By comparing the findings of the current study with the results from earlier studies, it shows the evidence that supports and extends some aspects of earlier findings concerning corrective feedback and learner uptake.

6.3.1 Rate of correction

The findings from the current study suggested that the proportion of learner's production containing errors was relatively small in comparison with other studies (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997; Panova & Lyster 2002). Despite this, the present

study suggested that both teachers attended to a substantial number of learner errors with corrective feedback. The findings implied that both teachers in the current study were engaged with feedback in response to a larger percentage of errors than those teachers who were reported in other feedback studies (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997; Lyster 2001). One possible reason could be a smaller number of errors identified in the current study compared to a larger percentage of errors reported in other studies. Another explanation could relate to both teachers' perception of error correction in meaning-focused lessons. The teacher interview data indicated that they considered error correction to be important for language teaching and learning and they were willing to attend to form in meaning-focused lessons. The positive perception of error correction can possibly account for the result that both teachers were enthusiastic about taking time out from a communicative activity to initiate attention to a form.

6.3.2 Teachers avoid direct corrective feedback

The evidence from the database also indicated that both teachers in the study prevalently attended to learner errors in their classrooms. Despite this, they rarely used direct corrective feedback such as explicit correction when correcting learner errors. By contrast, they overwhelmingly relied on reformulative feedback such as recasts, not explicitly informing pupils of their errors. Findings in this investigation lends support to the view expressed in literature that teachers used a variety of method of avoiding direct, overt corrective feedback in response to learner errors in class (Seedhouse 1997).

In the current study, an inconsistency between teacher's statements of belief and practice was identified. In the interviews, both teachers not only expressed their beliefs in the need for teacher action to address learner errors, but indicated that making errors was not an embarrassing matter, as it was part of L2 learning process. Despite this, in their responses in the classroom they avoided explicitly pointing out learner errors. When feedback was given to correct learner errors, it was most

likely to be implicit techniques- recasts. The explanation for this inconsistency could be that, in the interviews, teachers drew on their theoretical knowledge on learner errors; however, when confronted with learner errors in reality, the teacher relied on their practical knowledge. This clash was in alignment with the conclusion from a review article by Seedhouse (1997) who claimed that teachers on the one hand encouraged their learners to make errors; on the other hand, predominantly mitigated them in some way avoiding performing direct corrective feedback in response to learner errors. Therefore, teachers should change their interactional behaviour in the treatment of learner errors, as pedagogical recommendations would work best in harmony with the interactional organization of the L2 classroom (Seedhouse 1997).

The interview data suggested that both teachers avoided explicitly correcting errors due to their concern for embarrassment that overt correction might make. However, taking account of views of participant learners who were not really embarrassed with correction, in effect all interviewed pupils reported finding correction important, it seemed unnecessary for teachers to avoid using overt corrective feedback in the classroom. Additionally, there have been a number of experimental studies, with the suggestion that explicit feedback is more effective on L2 learning than implicit feedback in some situation (e.g., Carroll *et al.* 1992). Norris and Ortega's (2001) review suggests that overall, instruction that incorporates explicit instructions may lead to more substantial effects than implicit instructions. On the other hand, some other studies indicate that implicit feedback can also play a part in L2 learning (e.g. Mackey and Philp 1998). However, the findings of this study indicated that the two participant teachers widely relied on implicit corrective feedback when attending to learner errors. To maintain a balanced use of implicit and explicit corrective feedback, teachers should consider using more explicit feedback rather than exclusively rely on implicit feedback (also see Chapter 7 for a further discussion).

6.3.3 Teacher's provision of corrective feedback

The results from the current study indicated that teachers rarely informed their learners explicitly that their utterances were incorrect; therefore teacher corrective feedback was somewhat unclear and ambiguous. Nonetheless, both teachers seemed to consistently provide corrective feedback in response to learner errors in their classrooms. For example, the research indicated that grammatical errors favoured recasts; elicitation and repetition requests predominantly attended to phonological errors. This finding suggested that both teachers generally used feedback in a consistent way even though their correction was somewhat ambiguous in nature. However, some researchers claim that teachers generally use feedback in inconsistent and ambiguous ways (e.g., Allwright 1975; Chaudron 1977; Fanselow 1977).

Both teachers in the current study appeared to maintain the communicative flow of a lesson when attending to learner errors in lessons (see examples in section 5.3). This finding is in alignment with other feedback studies in which attention to form did not interrupt the flow of communication (Lyster and Ranta 1997; Ellis *et al.* 2001a). Despite differences between the two participant teachers, it should be noted that much of feedback in the current study provided learners with an opportunity to uptake. The rate was much higher than that was reported in immersion classroom (e.g. Lyster and Ranta 1997) where teachers provided limited opportunities for their learners to modify their output. Nevertheless, when compared to the study of Mackey *et al.* (2003), in which the vast majority of feedback (86% or more) offered learners an opportunity to uptake irrespective of dyad types (i.e., child NNS-NS; child NNS-NNS; adult NNS-NS; adult NNS-NNS), opportunities provided in the current study seemed to be less frequent. Several differences between the current study and the previous studies may help account for the contradictory findings, such as the context and instruction types. Mackey *et al.* (2003), a laboratory-based experimental study, examined interaction between dyads. Lyster and Ranta (1997) and the current study were both classroom-based, looking into natural classroom

discourse at a primary school level; however, the former was undertaken in French Immersion classroom, the latter in China EFL context. Given these differences, it is perhaps not surprising to find differential results of opportunity to uptake among different studies.

6.3.4 Recasts as a corrective feedback

This study confirmed the finding that recasts were the most dominant type of feedback in response to learner errors. Among the eight feedback types, feedback with recasts were the most frequent strategy in the study, which was in alignment with the results reported in other feedback studies (Lyster and Ranta 1997; Panova and Lyster 2002; Sheen 2004). Despite the highest frequency, recasts have been demonstrated the differences in frequency across settings in a considerable number of studies (see Table 5.4 on page 101 for details). Given the fact that these studies came from a different instructional setting, such as contexts, age of learner, instructor, it was not surprising to find the occurrence of recasts differed.

Lyster (e.g., Lyster and Ranta 1997; Lyster 1998a; Lyster 1998b) examined the different techniques that teachers used when reacting to student errors, suggesting that recasts- the most frequently used feedback type, were less effective at facilitating student responses than other feedback types. The findings from the current study confirmed the results demonstrating an overwhelming preference for recasts as feedback (see Table 5.3 on page 100 for details). Among all feedback types, the findings revealed that recasts and explicit correction resulted in the lowest rate of uptake- including the lowest rate of repair. This result may lie in the fact that recasts and explicit correction, by definition, have provided learners with a correct form, which do not necessarily require a response (Lyster 1998b:190). By contrast, Oliver and Mackey (2003) provided a contradictory finding that learners often modified their output immediately following recasts and explicit correction in their study. The contradiction between this finding and those of the current study that modified output rarely followed recasts and explicit correction illuminates the

importance of the context in which feedback occurs.

Recasts that immediately reformulate ungrammatical learner utterances are widely considered to be implicit corrective feedback (Long 1996). As claimed, the ambiguousness of recasts that induce students to consider them as non-corrective repetition accounted for the low responses following recasts (Lyster 1998b; Mackey *et al.* 2000). This may be true of other studies, but less likely to be the case in the current study where the low rate of uptake of recasts largely resulted from no opportunities to uptake following recasts rather than its ambiguousness in nature. The observation data showed that while attending to learner errors, the teachers did not always provide learners with an opportunity for an uptake to take place as illustrated in Example 1 (see page 105 for details).

6.3.5 The rate of learner uptake

As mentioned above, feedback that provides the correct form, such as a recast may not encourage learners to modify their output. By contrast, other feedback types without providing the correct form, such as elicitation, may elicit more responses. Lyster and Ranta (1997) argue that elicitation and metalinguistic feedback are most likely to achieve learner uptake than other types of feedback. By contrast, feedback with recasts results in the low rate of uptake although they seem to be strongly preferred by teachers. Sheen (2004) suggests that the rate of uptake following recasts varies across instructional contexts. The results of this study lend support to those of previous studies where learner uptake was examined, suggesting the importance of taking the instructional context into consideration.

In comparison with the study of Ellis *et al.* (2001a) and Sheen (2004) which were respectively undertaken in an ESL and EFL adult classroom, the overall learner uptake rate of the current study was relatively low; on the other hand, when compared to the results from Lyster and Ranta (1997) and Panova and Lyster's (2002) studies, the rate of learner uptake was higher. Although it is not possible to

determine the exact reason for this, instructional contexts, learner age and proficiency level are claimed to play a role in the rate of learner uptake. Lyster and Ranta's study examined primary school learners in French Immersion classroom; Ellis *et al.* (2001a) and Panova and Lyster (2002) explored ESL adult classrooms; Sheen (2004) looked into Korean EFL adult learners; the current study was situated in an EFL child context. Several differences between the current study and the previous studies may help account for the contradictory findings.

However, in the two studies of EFL classrooms- Sheen (2004) and the current study- the rate of uptake was reported to be differential. The explanation for the different result may reside in the following factors: a) the age of learner (Korean adult learners vs. Chinese young learners); b) instructors: two native speakers of English vs. two native speakers of Chinese; c) context: language school (class size= 4-6 learners) vs. primary school (class size= 35-36 learners); d) language proficiency: low intermediate to high intermediate vs. elementary. Given these differences, it was not surprising to find the rate of uptake differed between the two EFL contexts. By examining teacher feedback and learner uptake across four communicative classroom settings, Sheen (2004) concluded that both uptake and repair seemed to be more prevalent in the ESL and EFL adult contexts than in the immersion child setting. The evidence of the current study extended the finding by providing further empirical evidence that the rate of uptake and repair in the EFL child context appeared to be greater than Immersion child setting, but smaller than in the EFL and ESL adult settings.

6.3.6 Corrective feedback, learner uptake and L2 learning

According to Long's (1996) interaction hypothesis, corrective feedback is facilitative of L2 learning as it connects input, learner's capacity, selective attention and output into a meaningful environment. Th is study has examined teachers' corrective feedback and learner uptake, particularly looking into how participant teachers handle form and learners respond to such feedback in the actual

classrooms. A number of empirical research considering the effect of corrective feedback on L2 learning suggested that exposure to input with corrective feedback can promote greater L2 development (e.g., Carroll and Swain 1993; Doughty and Varela 1998; Long *et al.* 1998; Mackey and Philp 1998).

This study did not experimentally test the developmental effects of corrective feedback; despite this, the results of this study showed that EFL classroom interaction gave rise to corrective feedback that subsequently resulted in learner uptake in certain amount. When an error occurred, both teachers often employed corrective feedback to attend to the form. The results from this study indicated that both teachers responded to 73% of the total learner errors with corrective feedback in their lessons. This suggests that in the EFL classrooms both teachers often take advantage of corrective feedback, which has been theoretically and empirically proved facilitative of L2 learning. Such attention to form provides learners with an opportunity to negotiate of form or meaning through classroom interaction. Some researchers suggest that learners who receive corrective feedback can potentially know their utterances were problematic thus learners would modify their production afterwards (e.g., Schmidt 1990; Swain 1995; Long 1996).

Furthermore, the evidence of this study also indicated that more than 60% of the total teachers' corrective feedback provided learners with an opportunity to correct their errors. This implies that opportunities for learning were created. Such opportunities are a prerequisite for learner uptake, which has been claimed to be facilitating their L2 learning process by a number of researchers. Some researchers argue that neither the learner's repetition of the correct form or the use of alternative forms following feedback can be considered as evidence of learning (Corder 1967; Gass 1988). The evidence from this study indicates that teachers often created opportunity for learning by allowing learner uptake to take place.

Some researchers claims that uptake with repair provides evidence that learners

have noticed the teacher's correction (e.g., Swain 1985; Lightbown 2000). Some researchers, however, claim further that students benefit from producing the correct forms. For example, Loewen (2005) suggests that successful uptake is one of the main predictors of students' subsequent accurate test scores. In this study, when teachers provided corrective feedback to attend to form, learners often corrected or at least tried to correct themselves or peers. The rate of learner uptake in this study was as high as 62%, which to some extent suggests that the learners can actually correct or at least notice teacher's corrective feedback.

Although learner uptake can not be considered as an evidence of acquisition (e.g., Ellis *et al.* 2001a), it serves as evidence that learners have understood the teacher's feedback and that uptake may help learners to notice the gap between the target form and an interlanguage form (Mackey *et al.* 2000). Corrective feedback has an effect on L2 learning; successful uptake is the best predictor of correct scores on tests (Loewen 2005). Some studies claim that interaction allows learners to comprehend items in the target language and that comprehended input is important for L2 learning (Gass 1988; Ellis *et al.* 1994). The current study provides evidence that teachers often attended to learner errors with corrective feedback, which often resulted in learner uptake. Arguably, this focus-on-form practice may be potentially beneficial for L2 learning.

6.4 Summary

Having summarised the major findings, this chapter has provided possible explanations for the results in the study. It has also compared the results of the present study with the results found in previous studies. The research has indicated that the findings from the current study provide evidence to support and extend earlier findings. The next chapter discusses the implications and limitations of the current research.

Chapter 7 Implications and Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter has attempted to report research by providing a summary of the results and comparing the findings of the present study with the results found in previous studies. This chapter starts with a consideration of the implications of the study, explaining how the study can make contribution to relevant knowledge. It also discusses the limitations of this study and some general ideas for future studies in order to advance the field. It concludes with concluding remarks.

7.2 Implications of the study

This section provides comments about the implications of the results for pedagogical significance and professional training, in the hope that it may provide evidence, which incorporates the findings into the existing framework.

7.2.1 Pedagogical significance

Long's (1996) interaction hypothesis has served as a major theoretical framework for L2 empirical studies on corrective feedback over the last two decades. Pedagogically, corrective feedback is an important component of form-focused instruction, which is considered as effective for L2 learning. Focus-on-form instruction provides error correction within meaning-focused activities in which learner's attention is drawn to the connection between meaning and form. Many L2 researchers argue such time is optimal for learners (Doughty 2001). The current study confirms that it is possible to incorporate error correction into meaning-focused instruction and provides a clear support for focus-on-form as an instruction option in China EFL context. One suggestion is that teachers may be better advised to think of focus-on-form as part of their pedagogy, and to identify what constitutes effective pedagogic practice. There is a need to consider how to take advantage of corrective feedback that can potentially benefit learner's L2 learning. A potential tool for understanding may enable teachers to maximize their

potential of classroom instruction to improve students' learning. Another suggestion relates to the teacher's management of attention towards form-meaning relationship in focus-on-form instructions contexts. Teachers are advised to acquire the skills of guiding attentional focus across a task because task input data may play a significant role as a resource during task performance (Samuda 2001).

The results from this study revealed a clear preference for implicit corrective feedback such as recasts, leaving little space for explicit feedback, such as explicit correction or metalinguistic feedback. As indicated previously, there is increasing evidence that corrective feedback contributes to L2 learning; however, explicit feedback has been proved more beneficial for L2 learning than implicit options. For example, a number of experimental studies have examined the differences between explicit and implicit feedback on L2 learning, suggesting the former is more effective (e.g., Ellis 2006). Overall, instruction that incorporates explicit feedback has been proved more beneficial for L2 learning than implicit instruction. Theoretically, Schmidt's (1990; 1995) noticing hypothesis advises teachers to make instruction explicitly, as feedback seems pointless if it fails to draw learners' attention to it. On the other hand, implicit feedback has been proved helpful for L2 learning by a number of experimental studies (e.g., Mackey and Philp 1998). Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest just as Ellis (2003) did a balanced diet of both types of feedback. Hence it is reasonable to recommend that the two observed Chinese teachers should use more explicit feedback because they used so little of this type of feedback. Thus, there is a need to provide a wider range of feedback strategies to ensure a richer feedback environment, so that teachers can selectively use different types of corrective feedback on the basis of who makes the error and depending on their judgement of a learner's ability and characteristics.

However, when giving a careful consideration to the teachers' situation in a professional context, their current practice of focus-on-form fits the socio-cultural resources, and can not change easily. For example, often recasts are a matter of

saving time; teachers would consciously or unconsciously employ recasts to attend to learner errors due to time pressure. Also the constraint of teachers' language ability and learners' low proficiency level somehow predispose teachers to widely rely on recasts rather than other corrective feedback such as clarification requests.

The findings also suggested that both teachers sometimes did not always provide learners with an opportunity to produce the correct form. Given that the benefit of participating in interaction is hypothesized to be the opportunity it provides for output (Swain, 1995), it is probably worthwhile to allow an uptake to take place. A number of researchers have confirmed the positive effect of participation on L2 learning. For example, Mackey (1999) indicates that opportunities to participate in negotiated interaction leads to acquisition gains. Loewen (2007) reckons it is beneficial to get the learners to produce the correct form once teachers start the process of error correction, as he speculates the actual production of uptake is facilitative of learning. Another recommendation is that teachers need to consider providing learners with an opportunity to modify their output when reacting to form in lessons. Swain (1985) claims that the learner's production of modified output that is necessary for L2 mastery may result from ample opportunities for output and the provision of feedback.

7.2.2 Professional development

Another significance of the study relates to teacher pre-service training course, particularly Chinese EFL teachers; focus-on-form as an instruction option may need to be put into teacher training course. Van Lier (1988) claims that correction is an important variable in language learning. Despite this, Truscott (1996) argues that language correction is often ineffective as teachers often lack the skills to analyze and explain students' problems; and the students lack the skills to understand and use the feedback. Given this, it may be demanding for language teachers to effectively provide corrective feedback when attending to form in communicative lessons. The results from the current study indicate that teachers lacked theoretical

knowledge about focus-on-form instruction, in part because they had not received any systematic training on it. During the course of the study, when teacher training was mentioned, it was in relation to faculty meeting or peer-monitoring programme rather than their professional training relating to instruction methodologies. Arguably, there is then a need to give teachers more formal training on focus-on-form instruction so as to raise their awareness of it: what corrective feedback is, the important role that pupils can play, why corrective feedback is important and how it can be effectively incorporated into teaching.

Ellis *et al.* (2002) suggest initial training courses for teachers need to ensure that teachers are equipped with the skills needed to induce students' attention to form and that they have an understanding of the potential advantages and disadvantages of the different procedures involved. They further claim that teachers in training need to develop a repertoire of options for addressing form in the context of communicative teaching. In accordance with the claim, it may be argued that training course needs to provide information concerning a source of feedback techniques and when and how to correct it. Informed by their professional training, teachers may expect to be more aware of the advantages and disadvantages of focus-on-form instruction and have a wider range of feedback techniques and know what options fit their classroom and then incorporate them into their classroom.

In addition to training for teachers, there is a need to consider how to help teachers to find the balance between theory and practice when attending to form in English lessons. In reality, a number of constraints such as large class sizes and sheer volume of curriculum have challenged China EFL instruction at the primary school level. Interview data implied that class sizes ranging from 35 to 40 were too big to develop a good awareness of the individual students and to respond to their needs, with the suggestion of an average of 20 per class. However, this proposal does not seem viable within a short period of time due to the shortage of qualified English teachers in China. Also indicated in Chapter 1, English has been introduced at

Grade 3 in almost all primary schools since 2001, lowering the age of compulsory instruction of English as a school subject from Grade 5 to Grade 3 of primary schools. Due to this policy change, there are not enough primary school English teachers to cover all the classes let alone keeping class sizes as small as 20. As claimed by Liu (2007), less than one-third primary school English teachers are graduates from local educational institutes, half come from the local two-year teachers' colleges, and the rest may come from other professions with no professional training in English at all. Given the shortage of qualified English teachers and large sizes of class, policy makers may expect to take account of the instructional situation in China EFL context while deciding on new policies. Syllabus designers may also need to bear in mind these constraints while defining syllabus contents to help alleviate the current situation- large class sizes in China's EFL at primary schools.

Interview and classroom observation data reveal that both teachers were not always able to attend to form and provide students with an opportunity to correct an error in lessons due to time constraints. Evidence also indicates that not all activities in the textbook can be fully engaging since teachers had to teach the whole curriculum and cover all pedagogical objectives. To ease the problem of time pressure, one possible solution is to increase English instruction time from original three periods per week (35 minutes per period) to five periods per week; however, this would inevitably place a burden on EFL teachers since this means more workloads for them. Thus, there is a need to reconsider the design of curriculum taking into account practical factors, such as class parameters, to generally make teaching better, more focused and more rigorous. When curriculum designers define syllabus requirements, they should have in mind an array of elements that teachers and learners are faced with: classroom parameters (such as class size, time), students' proficiency levels, students' needs and teachers' capacity to fulfill their responsibility. It is also suggested when teachers plan their classes, they should consider learner's proficiency level as well as classroom parameters, to

demonstrate the ability to efficiently differentiate syllabus requirements according to the real classroom situation.

Another implication for individual teachers to consider is that teachers use the findings of this study to become more aware of focus-on-form instruction and make better use of corrective feedback when attending to form in EFL lessons. Arguably, individual teachers may expect to vary their use of corrective feedback according to contexts but need to do so in more systematically planned way. Walz (1982) claims that good teachers need to know their students and to learn who are the most sensitive to correction, as it could be the case that some students wish to be corrected all the time, while others are more easily inhibited. Accordingly, one suggestion is teachers need to acquire the ability to vary their choice of feedback option depending on their knowledge of the student's ability to attend to the form being corrected. Teachers may need to take into account factors such as learner's proficiency level or other instructional factors when reacting to form occurs in lessons and to drive learner's inter-language development forward. Chaudron (1988) suggests that emphasized self-repair is more likely to improve learner's ability to monitor their own target language. So there might be a need for teachers to prioritize those feedback techniques that are more likely to result in learner repair when attending to form. I also hope the findings can serve as a kind of scaffolding tool for teachers to promote effective teaching and learning and ultimately help the students realize their learning targets.

7.3 Limitations of the study

This study involved the recording and transcribing of instructional discourse in order to understand how instruction was accomplished in an EFL context. There are a number of important limitations to the current study. First, the sample size for the study was rather small. Two EFL classrooms were observed, including 71 learners and their two teachers. The total of 26 lessons of classroom interaction generated by pupils and their two teachers may be insufficient to generalize the findings of

the current study. The study needs to be replicated in other contexts and with learners of different ages and a wider range of developmental levels before any possible generalizations can be made. I am also aware that there is a limitation in the way I analyze the data- a very limited number of teachers and pupils' perspectives were available to assist the interpretation of particular episodes.

One limitation relates to observation effects. The potential effect of observation on the data cannot be overlooked, even though I have attempted to eliminate the effect of my presence to the minimum. Another limitation may be I do not know exactly the level of students' language proficiency and how teachers' intuitive knowledge of their students' language proficiency affects their use of different feedback strategy and indeed whether they would provide opportunities for learner uptake to happen or not.

Another limitation of this study lies in the potential ambiguity of my research positioning. I wanted to conduct more interviews with participants to get more deeply subjective understanding of their practice. However, the reality did not allow me to do so. Perhaps the intention to grasp the subjective meaning of social action has not been fully achieved. I have tried to capture the subjective meaning but it is a real challenge.

Another limitation of the present study relates to the absence of any measures of learner's L2 learning. Previous research has indicated corrective feedback has considerable potential for providing learners with significant L2 learning opportunities, and some classroom research has shown experimentally that interactional feedback from the teacher benefits L2 learning (Doughty and Varela 1998; Lyster 2004; Ammar and Spada 2006). Unlike other experimental studies, this study did not experimentally test the children's L2 learning. By contrast, it was designed to examine only learner uptake immediately following corrective feedback in EFL lessons. This study is based on theoretical grounds for the

assumption that successful uptake can promote L2 learning, it needs to be emphasized that successful uptake is no guarantee of acquisition (Ellis *et al.* 2001a). Thus, claims related to language learning remain speculative and subject to further empirical investigation. Clearly there is a need to examine whether focus-on-form that includes successful uptake leads to L2 learning.

7.4 Future research

This study has revealed that the two participant teachers provided feedback in response to a similar proportion of learner errors in their respective classrooms. It should be noted here teachers with different instructional styles (e.g., more pair and group work instruction) may provide corrective feedback differently in various instructional contexts. Furthermore, this study has suggested that learners in the present study often actively modified their output when they were allowed to do so. As indicated earlier, the learners in the current study were children at a low level of proficiency. Other learners such as adolescents, young adults or adults, with different proficiency levels might behave in different ways. Teachers and learners, who use different instructional materials, may behave differently. Further research is required to demonstrate the occurrence and effectiveness of correction feedback in other instructional contexts.

The results of this study are compatible with the results of other studies concerning teachers' tendency to use extensive recasts at the expense of other feedback strategies when reacting to learner errors. Another interesting finding of the current study is the low rate of recasts resulted from infrequent opportunities that recasts entailed but rather its ambiguousness by nature. To date, a number of studies have investigated recasts as a corrective feedback strategy, despite this, there is a dearth of empirical studies undertook in China's EFL contexts. Further research is demanded to specifically look into recasts across a variety of instructional and naturalistic contexts in China to determine if the findings of the current study also apply to other contexts. Studies regarding other subject areas in China are also

required to examine whether or not the recasts preference is a cultural thing.

While the current study has provided some insights into focus-on-form instruction by examining corrective feedback and learner uptake in an L2 context, it did not demonstrate experimentally the effects on L2 learning of focus-on-form as instruction option in china's EFL context. Additional experimental studies are needed to investigate the impact of corrective feedback on learner L2 learning across instructional contexts in China.

7.5 Concluding remarks

As noted in the introductory chapter, one main objective of the study is to understand the role of corrective feedback in L2 learning by examining the provision and use of corrective feedback in focus-on-form instruction contexts in China. This study has explored how focus-on-form instruction was accomplished through teacher-pupil interaction. I looked into classroom discourse in the hope to gain some special insights into how specific corrective feedback and learner errors correlated with learner uptake in a child EFL context. Having completed this study, I speculate I can say that I have gained some special insights. I now see error correction can be incorporated into meaning-focused instruction in China's EFL context. Both teachers were often willing to take time out from communicative activities to attend to form occurred in lessons without impeding the flow of communication; learners who were actively engaged with communicative activities, were capable of responding to such feedback when they were allowed to do so. However, the study has also shown such instruction will always have an impact on L2 learning, but that this impact is complex, multifaceted, and is not necessarily always as positive as some advocates of corrective feedback would have us believe. Teachers need not be afraid to correct errors when they arise. Of course, it does not necessarily mean it is beneficial to correct every error in the classroom. Good teachers may need to know what corrective feedback options are available and incorporate them into their classroom as they see fit. Teachers may also need to

take into account their learners' level of L2 proficiency when making decision about corrective feedback. It is my hope that other educators, especially teachers, can use the findings of this study to take advantage of corrective feedback and consequently improve their instructional practices and ultimately help their learners reach their learning goals.

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Appendix 1: Observation sheet

Observation sheet

Teacher: Class: Date:

Fieldnotes:_____

Time	Nominated Pupil	Classroom action	Researcher Notes

Appendix 2: Example field note

Observation sheet

Teacher: Yang Class: 6(4) Date: 09/04/2007 (13:25-14:00)

Fieldnotes: I arrived 5 minutes before class began. I pulled a chair and sat at the back of the classroom. I took out my fieldwork notebook and the children were playing outside. Pupils are playing and playing with each other. In the classroom, As well as the teacher was in the classroom. Pupils stop playing and begin.

Time	Nominated Pupil	Classroom action	Researcher Notes
		I. Story Time	2 pupils are invited to tell story to the class.
02:24	P10	like eat?	
02:51	P13	play → playing	Today, it is Paul Butler's turn to read in front of the class.
21:20	P10	like eat play on Friday 9a.	
			The teacher only corrects one error during story time although there are many errors there,
02:50		2 Warm-up activities	
		Pupils are going to say some words	like how to pronounce
		(with a particular letter).	
	P12	feel	① (P1)
	P13	four	② (P1) Pupils are actively
	P20	food	③ (P1) participating
	P1	foot	④ (P1)
	P2	plant	
	P18	people	(P1)
	P4	pear	
	P19	watch	P13 knew
	P5	what	P12 knew.
	P6	would	
	P10	cow	
	P15	How	(2nd)
	P9	House	
04:33		③ Game - playing	
		c a t P13 P20 P5 P10 P15	pupils actively participating
		c l e a n P33 P12 P14 P1 P3	three words having the
		s i l l y P12 P19	same letter
		w a s h P12	Teacher encourages pupils to correct
		w a t c h P5 P12 P13	
07:40		④ Question time (What do you usually do on the weekend?)	
	P3	Visit grandma	
	P21	badminton	
	P12	Under mountain	

Appendix 3: Interview Guide (1st interview with both teachers)

Name: Venue:

Time: Date:

Field notes:

1. How long have you been teaching English at primary level?
2. What is your highest degree?
3. What is your major in that degree?
4. What is your current professional title?
5. How many classes are you teaching at the moment? Are they at the same grade? How many lessons do pupils have per week?
6. Can you specifically describe your majority pupils' language proficiency level? For example, what can they do in English?
7. How do you normally arrange 35-minute in-class time? Can you roughly describe the ratio of the four skills?
8. What do you normally do when pupils produce errors in class, such as speaking English ungrammatically?
9. Do you give them an opportunity to correct their errors? Why?
10. What do pupils normally do when you correct their errors?
11. What kinds of strategies do you use to correct pupils errors? Which one is the most efficient?

Appendix 4 Consent forms:

Participant Consent Form 1 [for teachers]

Dear Ms XX

I am a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, England. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project that is performed as partial fulfilment of the requirement for my doctoral degree in applied linguistics at the University of Bristol of England. Please read the following information below carefully before giving your consent. Your participation in this project will provide useful information on this topic. You will be asked to be interviewed and observed. I plan to interview you several times for about 40 minutes each time before and after the lesson observations. I also plan to observe and audio record the lessons over 8-10 week period. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. All data from this project will be used for research purposes only. I will make sure that data are confidentially and anonymously protected and your identity will never be disclosed if I disseminate the findings more widely (e.g. publication). According to the rules of the University of Bristol, I would like to have a written record of your consent, so please tick the boxes below and sign and date below indicating that you agree to comply:

- ❑ I consent to being interviewed, audio recorded, and observed by Beibei ZHAO.
- ❑ I consent to such data being analyzed for research purposes and understand that data are confidentially and anonymously protected and my identity will never be disclosed if the findings are disseminated more widely.

SIGNATURE: DATE:

If you have any questions or concerns later, please contact me at:

Beibei ZHAO, Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, 35 Berkeley Square, Bristol BS8 1JA Email: edzbz@bris.ac.uk

Participant Consent Form 2 [for students]

I am a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project that is performed as partial fulfilment of the requirement for my doctoral degree in applied linguistics at the University of Bristol of England. Your teacher has agreed to participate in this study. As part of my study, I will observe and audio-tape the classroom and I will discuss my observations and transcription with the teacher. I would like to ask your consent to being audio-taped and interviewed. The data will be used for research purposes only. I will make sure that data are confidentially and anonymously protected and your identity will never be disclosed if I disseminate the findings more widely (e.g. publication). The rules of the university require that I have a paper record of your consent. Please check the appropriate box below, complete the rest of the form, and return it to me.

Please tick the appropriate box below and sign and date below.

- ❑ I consent to being observed, audio-recorded and interviewed by Beibei Zhao. I consent to such data being analysed and used for research purposes. I understand that anonymity will be preserved if extracts are included in research publications or reports.
- ❑ I do not consent to being observed, audio-recorded and interviewed by Beibei Zhao.

SIGNATURE: DATE:

If you have any questions or concerns later, please contact me at:

Beibei Zhao, Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, 8/10 Berkeley Square, Bristol BS8 1JA

Email: edzbz@bris.ac.uk

Thank you very much indeed for your cooperation!

Participant Consent Form 3 [for parents]

I am a doctoral student of Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, England, and I am doing research project that is performed as partial fulfilment of the requirement for my doctoral degree in applied linguistics at the University of Bristol of England. Your child's teacher has agreed to participate in this study. According to the rules of Bristol University, I am required to ask consent from you on behalf of your child to participating in the research.

As part of my study, I will observe and audio-recorder the classroom. I would like to ask your consent on behalf of your child to being audio taped and perhaps discussed by the teacher and myself. The data will be used for research purposes only. Pseudonym is used throughout the research. I will keep data anonymously and confidentially if I disseminate the findings more widely (e.g., in publications). I would like to have a written record of your consent, so please tick the boxes below and sign and date below indicating that you agree to comply on behalf of your child:

- ❑ I consent to my child being interviewed, audio recorded, and observed by Beibei ZHAO. I consent to such data being analyzed for research purposes and understand that data are confidentially and anonymously protected and my child's identity will never be disclosed if the findings are disseminated more widely.
- ❑ I do not consent to my child being observed, audio-recorded and interviewed by Beibei Zhao.

If you have any questions or concerns later, please contact me at:

Beibei ZHAO, Graduate School of Education,

University of Bristol, 35 Berkeley Square, Bristol BS8 1JA

Email: edzbz@bris.ac.uk

Thank you very much indeed for your cooperation!

Participant Consent Form 4 [for students] Chinese version

参与研究（学生）同意书

同学：

您好！

本人赵蓓蓓，英国布里斯托尔大学应用语言学专业在读博士生，将邀请您参与本人的博士研究课题。您的老师和学校校方已经同意本次研究的进行。依照英国高校的学术研究惯例，参与研究的人员均须签署本“参与研究同意书。在签署“参与研究同意书”之前，请您仔细阅读以下内容：

1、 本人将旁听您的英语课，并对整个上课过程进行录音；本人还将采访你们，并对过程进行录音；

2、 本人郑重申明，所有收集的数据仅用于该项博士课题研究；为了保护参与者的隐私，数据在使用过程中均采用匿名形式；

3、 依照英国高校的学术研究惯例，参与研究的人员均须签署本“参与研究同意书”。

根据上述内容，请您作如下选择：

如同意参与该项课题研究，请在选项①前的方框内打钩；否则请在选项②前的方框内打钩；最后请署名和注明日期。

❑ ①本人同意参与赵蓓蓓的该项研究课题，并同意其收集数据和

使用数据；

❑ ②本人不同意参与赵蓓蓓的该项研究课题。

签名：

日期：_____年____月____日

谢谢您对该项博士研究课题的支持！**如有任何疑问请与本人联系：**

姓名：赵蓓蓓

邮箱：edzbz@bris.ac.uk

联系电话：15967123542

Participant Consent Form 5 [for parents] Chinese version

参与研究（家长）同意书

亲爱的家长：

您好！

本人赵蓓蓓，是英国布理斯托尔大学应用语言学专业在读博士生，将邀请您的孩子参与本人的博士研究课题。该项课题主要是研究小学生英语课堂，其研究成果将有助于您的孩子更好的学习英语和使用英语。您孩子所在学校校方已经同意本次研究的进行。依照英国高校的学术研究惯例，参与研究的人员均须签署本“参与研究同意书”；如果参与者是未成年者，则另需监护人签署。在此，本人也希望能得到您的支持。在您签署“参与研究（家长）同意书”之前，请仔细阅读以下内容：

4、 本人将旁听您孩子的英语课，并对整个上课过程进行录音；本人还可能会采访您的孩子。

5、 本人郑重申明，所有收集的数据仅用于该项博士课题研究；为了保护参与者的隐私，数据在使用过程中均采用匿名形式；

根据上述内容，请您作如下选择：

如同意参与该项课题研究，请在选项①前的方框内打钩；否则请在选项②前的方框内打钩；最后请署名和注明日期。

❑ ①本人同意孩子参与赵蓓蓓的该项研究课题，并同意其收集数据和使用数据；

❑ ②本人不同意孩子参与赵蓓蓓的该项研究课题。

签名：

日期：_____年____月____日

谢谢您对该项博士研究课题的支持！**如有任何疑问请与本人联系：**

姓名：赵蓓蓓

邮箱：edzbz@bris.ac.uk

联系电话：15967123542

Appendix 5: Transcription conventions

Speakers

T	English teacher
Ps	Pupils
P1… P4…P36	Individual pupil (each pupil was assigned a number from 1 to 36)

Coding

Italics	turns containing errors
{	Beginning of concurrent speech
(*), (**)	inaudible (one word, longer string)
(.)	pause
*	Utterances interrupted
. . .	extraneous material omitted
HE	Word stressed (emphasized)
h-i-s	voice spelling
( )	Explanation on what happens (stage directions)
9:25	Time reading from audio recorder

Punctuation

Full stops, commas, question marks and exclamation marks used as necessary to illustrate intonation.

Appendix 6: Data file (SPSS)

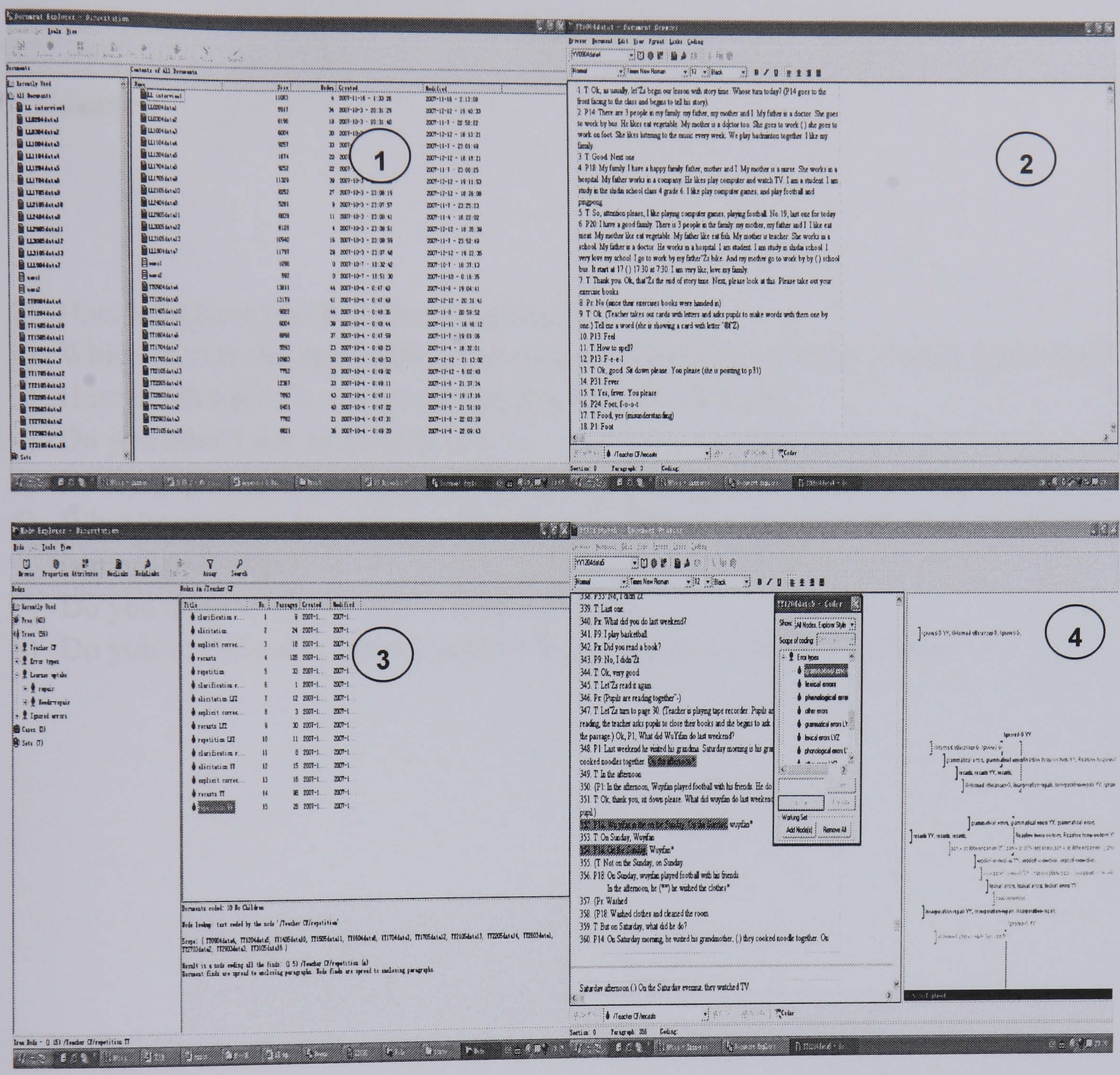
FOCUS ON FORM EPISODES	CASE (1=CASE ONE; 2=CASE TWO)	FEEDBACK OR NO FEEDBACK (1=YES, 2=NO)	ERROR TYPE (1=GRAMMATICAL ERRORS; 2= PHONOLOGICAL ERRORS; 3=LEXICAL ERRORS)	FEEDBACK TYPE (1=RECASTS; 2=REPETITION, 3=EXPLICIT CORRECTION; 4=USE OF L1; 5=ELICITATION; 6=CLARIFICATION; 7=INVITE OTHERS; 8=REPETITION REQUESTS)	OPPORTUNITY TO UPTAKE (1=YES, 2=NO)	LEARNER RESPONSES (1=REPAIR; 2= NEEDS-REPAIR; 3= NO UPTAKE)
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						

Appendix 7: A summary description of a typical lesson

MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	THE TEACHER AND PUPILS
1-5	Story-time	In each lesson, three pupils take turns to tell a story. Based on their stories, the teacher often comes up with some questions and invites the remaining pupils to answer them.
5-10	Warm-up activities or question-and-answer session	To help pupils review what they learned in the previous lesson, the teacher often spends time on question-and-answer session; the pupils communicate with their teacher and peers.
10-15	New words and phrases introduction	To encourage communicate, the teacher often brings in pictures to serve as a stimulus to communication; the pupils identify objects or actions depicted in graphics.
15-20	Dialogue or conversation introduction	The teacher often introduces dialogues or conversations in the textbook by inviting pupils to communicate in class.
20-25	Making dialogues	The teacher often asks pupils to make a dialogue or conversation with a partner; the pupils make dialogues with their partners.
25-30	Listening activities	The teacher plays the tape recorder and asks pupils to do listening activities.
30-35	Reading activities	Pupils are required to read a passage and do the exercises afterwards.

Appendix 8: Using NVivo2

Below is a screenshot from NVivo2, with a brief description of how the software was used (see also Section 3.5.2).



The transcripts were typed in Microsoft word and saved as rich text format (.rtf), then were imported into NVivo's document system (①). I then used document browser to go through each document (②). I first provided free Nodes, which were subsequently organized into 'Trees' to express relationships of topics and subtopics in the later stage (③). I subsequently used document browser to code segments by highlighting relevant episodes and assigning codes to the data (④).

Appendix 9: Interview guide with individual pupils

Name: Proficiency level:

Class: Date: Time:

Field notes:

1) How long have you been learning English?
2) Which skill is the most difficult to conquer (listening, reading, writing, speaking)?
3) How much time do you spend learning English each day?
4) Do you attend any English classes?
5) Does my presence make your English classes different?
6) What happens to you when a mistake is pointed out by a teacher or a pupil? Who is more preferred?
7) Do you think error correction is face-losing?
8) Do you wish teacher gives you time to correct your mistakes in class?